

**All Gardens  
Great & Small**  
by  
York Co.  
Horticultural Agent  
**Tom Becker**



**10 ELEGANT HERBS**  
*This is the fourth in a series of articles on growing and preserving herbs in the home garden.*  
The top nine herbs grown by home gardeners are chives, basil, rosemary, lemon, verbena, oregano, sweet marjoram, parsley, French

tarragon, and thyme. We'll take a closer look at several of them this week and next.  
**Basil, Sweet (green) and Purple**  
Grown as a tender annual from seed. Basil likes the warmth of full sun to grow best. Purple basil, lacking chlorophyll, is more sus-

ceptible to shock in the early stages.

Sweet green basil can be dried, frozen in ice cubes, or used fresh. Blended with pine nuts, oil and cheese, this basil is the prime ingredient in pesto. It is also good for making flavored vinegar for salad dressing, or suffused in oil for flavored oil. Purple basil is best used fresh for salads, and for making flavored vinegar. In the garden, purple basil is a colorful contrast to annual flowers, and its color is useful in cut arrangements.

There are several forms of chives, but the most common one has roundish leaves that are used for their onion-like flavor. This perennial has lovely purple flowers made up of masses of florets.

**Chives**

Chives also like full sun and

rich soil. They can take partial shade, but will not grow as fully erect. The leaves die back in summer's heat, but may return in the fall. Clumps should last four to five years before dividing.

Chives can be harvested for fresh use in salads and recipes. Cut a few leaves to the base, but don't shear the whole plant down to the base or they won't be able to manufacture food for the roots. The flower heads can be used to make chive vinegar, and the flowers can also be dried. To dry the flowers, put them in an open paper bag. Don't tie the stems together or they may rot instead of dry.

Chives can be dried by snipping the leaves as you would for a salad, and then placing them on a fine screen or nylon mesh in a warm place, out of direct light. Stir regularly for several days. When dry, seal in jars.

**Lemon Verbena**

Lemon Verbena is a tender perennial that is best purchased as a growing plant. In the garden, it needs full sun and temperatures above 65 degrees F for best growth. Lemon verbena leaves can add a fresh flavor to fruit salads or beverages, but they are best

removed before serving because the leaves are very difficult to chew. The leaves can be dried by placing them on a screen or mesh in a warm place out of bright light. The dried leaves can be used to make a tea.

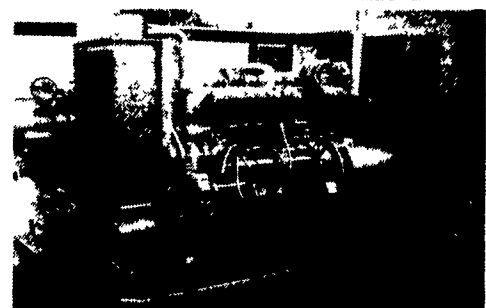
**Oregano**

*Origanum vulgare* and its cultivars are the familiar forms of oregano. This is a perennial hardy grown in the garden in full sun.

Oregano can be used fresh, but is most often dried. To dry, cut the stems to the base just as the plants come into flower. Place tips down in a paper bag. Tie the bag around the stems and hang in a warm place. Check for drying after two or three weeks by rubbing the bag between your hands. If you hear leaves falling to the bottom of the bag it is ready to be opened. Strip the leaves off the stems and finish drying in a 100 degree oven, checking frequently. Let cool, and then run the leaves through a coarse screen before bottling. If saving whole leaves, be sure to remove any bits of stem.

Oregano is used in a wide variety of cooking, in addition to sprinkling it on salads and pizzas. *The National Garden Bureau contributed to this article.*

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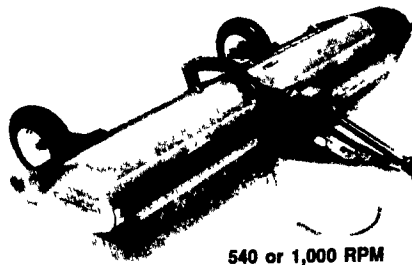
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