

HERBS

XENIA'S FAVORITE HERBS

(noted as A = annual or P = perennial)

Ornamental basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), (A):

bouquets and pollinators

Bouquet dill (*Anethum graveolens*), (A):

bouquets and pollinators

Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*), (P):

bouquets, pollinators, and teas

Lavender (*Lavandula* spp.), (P):

bouquets, pollinators, and teas

Lemon verbena (*Aloysia citodora*), (P):

bouquets and teas

Mint (*Mentha* spp.), (P): bouquets, pollinators, and teas

Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), (P):

bouquets and pollinators

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), (P): bouquets,

pollinators, and teas

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*), (P): bouquets,

pollinators, and teas

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), (P): bouquets,

pollinators, and teas

Below: A charming herbal bouquet is useful and aromatic.



Xenia considers herbs indispensable to Sweet Earth Co.'s flourishing floral business. "They are multi-faceted plants that can be used fresh in bouquets, but also dried for tea blends or for medicinal purposes. They are also an important element in our pest-management program."

The botanical definition of an herb is: an herbaceous plant that lacks a woody stem and dies to the ground each winter. Plants and plant parts used for culinary or fragrance purposes are also considered herbs. These are plants that satisfy all of the senses, valued for their usefulness in the cutting garden.

Many herbs, such as lavender, mint, oregano, sage, and yarrow, are perennials and return each season. Some tender herbs, such as all of the basil, are planted each year and are treated as annuals.

At Sweet Earth Co., Xenia integrates her herb plants throughout borders and beds, adding a verdant presence and many aromatic attributes to the landscape.



*Above: Bouquet dill (*Anethum graveolens*).*

WHEN TO PLANT

Herbs prefer organic, well-drained soil. Prior to planting, the area should be amended with compost. Herbs tolerate dry or hot conditions, as many species originate from Mediterranean regions. Annual herbs are started from seed and planted out after the last frost. Perennial herbs may be planted in spring. They are best planted as starts or propagated by taking cuttings or dividing existing plants.

WHEN TO HARVEST

Herbs are cut-and-come-again; when frequently harvested, plants will produce healthy regrowth. For use in bouquets, harvest the stems once they have flowered. Cut early in the morning or in the cool evenings and plunge the cut stems into water as soon as you can. To prevent wilting, condition herb stems in fresh water for 12–24 hours.

HERBS AS PEST MANAGEMENT

Many herbs are also valued in the cutting garden for their assistance in warding off pests while encouraging beneficial insects. Basil deters aphids, spider mites, and thrips. Allium, dill, and coriander repel aphids and encourage beneficial insects. Marigold is effective at repelling aphids and whitefly. Parsley attracts predatory wasps that feed on aphids. Interplanting these herbs among highly valued cut flowers, such as roses and dahlias, is part of a successful and ecofriendly pest-management strategy.