



School Gardening
Resources

PRIMARY LEVEL

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

Herb Planting and Useful Plants





Time of Year	All year round.
Aim	To plant a herb area in the school garden.
Resources Needed	Selection of potted herbs, peat-free compost, myopex or black plastic, bark mulch, hand trowels, shovels or spades, gloves, labels & signs.
Cross Curriculum Relevance	SESE: Living Things, Environmental Awareness and Care SPHE: Using senses, colour, smell, taste, touch Languages: New words/spelling Art: Making signs/drawings/pressed herbs Informal Curriculum: Healthy Eating, Food Dudes, Discover Primary Science



1 About herbs

Note: Herbs can be used as medicine or for cooking. They are beneficial for attracting insects and make good companion plants.

- ★ Herbs can be mixed in with vegetables, (annuals); planted around fruit bushes & fruit trees (spreading herbs such as mint, comfrey, nettles).
- ★ They can be given their own area or planted in an ornamental bed.
- ★ Herbs can be grown from seed or cuttings (a good garden book will give you instructions).
- ★ It is cheaper to grow your own than to buy from a garden centre. Some parents may have a stock of herb plants that could be donated.
- ★ Parsley, marigolds, borage and nasturtiums are all grown easily from seed (refer to sowing seeds worksheet).

- ★ Softwood cuttings can be taken in the summer & hardwood cuttings can be taken in the autumn.
- ★ Potted herbs can be planted at any time of the year.
- ★ Younger classes can be given the responsibility of caring for the herb garden.





2 Examples of useful herbs

Edible flowers:

Borage, Calendula, Nasturtiums

Herbal teas:

Mint, Lemon balm, Fennel

Cooking:

Thyme, Basil, Coriander, Chives,
Oregano, Dill, Parsley



3 Plants for soil fertility

Comfrey plants and nettles can be used to make a liquid feed for your 'hungry' vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes and pumpkins.

Comfrey is high in potassium, which is needed for flowers & fruiting.

Nettles are high in nitrogen, which is needed for green leafy growth.



4 Ideas for research projects

SESE - Research companion planting: why are comfrey, nettles, docks & dandelions useful plants?

Local Heritage - How were herbs used in the past? What do we use now?

Art/Communications - make a herb posy. Make a display for the garden or Green Schools notice board of herbs or useful plants for the garden. Make a herb identification booklet with pressed herbs from the garden.

Woodwork - make a herb bed.

Cookery - make herbal tea, use edible flowers in salads.





5 Useful plants

Peas & beans have the special ability to 'fix' nitrogen out of the air and convert it into a form that can be taken up by plants. When clearing a bed that had peas/beans growing in it, cut the stems at the base and allow the roots to remain in the soil. They will add nitrogen for the next crop, which is why they are usually followed by cabbages where crop rotation is being used.

Seaweed is full of vitamins & trace elements.

Dandelion & Dock are both useful plants as they have deep roots that bring up minerals & elements from the deep soil.

To learn how to make a **liquid feed** using these plants - please refer to worksheet Weeding and Summer Care.



6 Useful flowers in the garden

Many flowers have uses in the garden. Their main use is to attract pollinating insects, to add diversity & colour.

Quaking grass - sounds good in the wind.

Sunflowers - produce edible seeds.

Nasturtiums - edible flowers.

Sweet Pea - smell beautiful.

Health and Safety

- ★ Stay with your group.
- ★ Use tools safely.
- ★ Wash hands after garden session.
- ★ Never eat anything without asking an adult - some plants can be poisonous.
- ★ Please refer to the worksheet on Health & Safety for detailed information.

