

If your tastes lean toward the gourmet or toward the fresh and natural, you'll want to consider plantings of herbs--as plain or fancy as you like. Nothing spices up a dinner party like serving a uniquely delicious dish--and nothing makes a home as homey as the wonderful fragrance of a potpourri. With your own herb garden, these easy secrets can be as simple as the freshness of ingredients grown in your own garden.

Herbs display nature's beauty and magic. Yet they demand little care, spread naturally, and have unique essences. Their leaves, stems, blossoms, roots, and stalks are used for the flavorings and bouquets you and your guests will love.

For your herb garden, you can choose formal or informal arrangements. Formal arrangements, or traditional herb plantings, date back a long time. The Roman nobility's idea of luxury was a well-ordered garden gracing the entrances to their homes.

On the other hand, informal arrangements, such as a sea of spearmint crowding a lawn or walkway, give a refreshing scent when the mint is trampled underfoot or clipped with the lawn mower. Creeping thyme and chamomile offer the same results.

As you will see, herbs offer a wide range of choices. Whether sweet or sour, subtle or strong, they can be planted formally or informally and are easily tended. And they repay their simple requirements tenfold.