

Know 10 Culinary Herbs and Spices

About Community in Bloom

Community in Bloom (CIB) is a programme that was launched by the National Parks Board (NParks) in 2005. It aims to nurture a gardening culture among Singaporeans by encouraging and facilitating community gardening efforts. It is also an opportunity to build community bonds and strengthen social resilience in our City in Nature.



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#NParksBuzz #AnimalBuzzSG

For more information, visit our website at www.nparks.gov.sg/cib or email us at CommunityInBloom@nparks.gov.sg

For more information on plants in Singapore, visit NParks Flora & Fauna Web at www.nparks.gov.sg/florafauweb

For more gardening resources and tips, visit go.gov.sg/gardening-resources

To learn more about our City in Nature, scan the QR code or visit www.nparks.gov.sg/CityInNature



This brochure features 10 of the most commonly cultivated culinary herbs and spices in Singapore.

We hope this brochure will encourage you to try growing these plants on your own or in your community garden!

How to Propagate New Plants

Plants can be grown from seed, or propagated vegetatively. Propagating plants from parts such as the stems or roots is known as vegetative propagation.

Vegetative propagation has some advantages:

- It is cheap and efficient.
- It takes a shorter time for the propagated plants to reach maturity.
- The new plants retain all of the characteristics of the parent plant.

Here are some common methods for growing new plants:

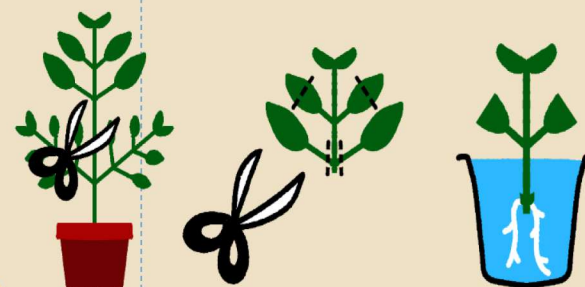
Seeds

Obtain seeds from the fruit of a healthy, mature plant. If unavailable, seeds can be bought from nurseries or shops. Plant the seeds directly into the ground, or grow them in seed trays before transplanting into other suitable locations.



Stem Cuttings

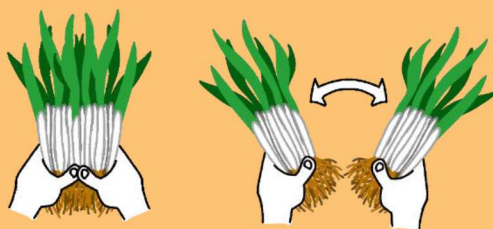
Cut a mature but green section of a stem and remove some of the leaves. Place the cutting in water until it produces roots, and then plant it in soil that drains well.



Plants that can be grown from stem cuttings include Laksa, Indian Borage, Mint and Thai Basil.

Division

Grip the plant or plant cluster by the root ball and gently divide it into several clusters. Plant each cluster separately.



Plants that can be grown by division include Lemongrass, Chives, English Mint and Turmeric.

Chives

Scientific Name
Allium tuberosum



Cultivation

Chives grow well in fertile, loamy soil that drains well. To prevent excessive spreading of the plant, remove the flowers before it sets seed. This plant is hardy and resistant to most pests and diseases.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade, and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by division or seeds.

Culinary Uses

All parts of the plant, including the flowers, roots and leaves, taste like garlic. They can be consumed raw in salads, or added to stir fries, soups, or meat dishes.

Curry Leaf Plant

Scientific Name
Murraya koenigii



Cultivation

The Curry Leaf Plant grows well in fertile, loamy soil that drains well.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in full sun and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by seeds, which can be obtained from mature seed pods. Sow seeds immediately after harvesting as they only remain viable for up to three weeks.

Culinary Uses

The leaves produce a distinctive oil that is used to flavour and enhance the aroma of a wide variety of dishes including curries, dal, soups, and snacks. They can be boiled, fried or dried.

English Mint

Scientific Name
Mentha spicata



Cultivation

English Mint is tolerant of most soil types, but thrives in moist soil. It is susceptible to aphids, rust and powdery mildew.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade, and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by division, seeds or stem cuttings.

Culinary Uses

The leaves are used raw in salads or as a garnish, and can be boiled to add flavour to teas, desserts, candies and sauces.

Indian Borage

Scientific Name
Plectranthus amboinicus



Cultivation

Indian Borage requires sandy soil that drains well. It grows quickly, but its stems are susceptible to breakage.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in semi-shade and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by stem cuttings.

Culinary Uses

The leaves are used to add flavour to meat and bean dishes, especially in Caribbean cuisine. Their flavour is described as being a combination of thyme and oregano.

Laksa

Scientific Name
Persicaria odorata



Cultivation

Laksa grows best in well-draining soil that is kept consistently moist. It can also be grown indoors on a sunny windowsill.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade and needs lots of water. It can be propagated by seeds or stem cuttings.

Culinary Uses

The leaves are used to add the signature flavour to the popular dish *laksa*, which is a spicy noodle soup made with coconut milk or *asam* (tamarind).

Lemongrass

Scientific Name
Cymbopogon citratus



Cultivation

Lemongrass grows quickly and produces many stalks if grown in full sunlight. It prefers moist, well-draining loamy soils, but will tolerate most soil types. The plant can be divided into clusters, with each cluster planted in a separate container or area.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in full sun and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by division.

Culinary Uses

The crushed stalk, which has a lemony scent, is used in a variety of Southeast Asian dishes, such as curries, seafood, poultry dishes and soups. Essential oils extracted from the leaf stalk are used in perfumes, cosmetics, skin care and aromatherapy products.

Pandan

Scientific Name
Pandanus amaryllifolius



Cultivation

Pandan is a very common and easily grown plant in Singapore, where it flourishes naturally on slopes with moist soil. To maintain the plant as a shrub, regularly harvest the leaves and water generously. This species is susceptible to the Pandanus Mealybug (*Laminococcus pandani*).

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in semi-shade and needs lots of water. It can be propagated by division.

Culinary Uses

Juice extracted from the leaves is used to add fragrance to various types of teas, desserts, rice dishes and jams. The leaves are traditionally steamed to extract the juice, and then discarded. Chlorophyll in the juice will colour food and drinks a distinctive green.

Sawtooth Coriander

Scientific Name
Eryngium foetidum



Cultivation

Sawtooth Coriander grows well in sandy loamy soil that drains well. It is hardy and resistant to most pests and diseases.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade, and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by division or seeds.

Culinary Uses

The leaves have a similar but stronger flavour than Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), and are used similarly in soups and stir-fries.

Thai Basil

Scientific Name
Ocimum basilicum



Cultivation

Thai Basil grows best in a sunny location with fertile soil that drains well. It can also be grown indoors near a sunny window if it receives at least six hours of sunlight each day.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade, and requires moderate watering. It can be propagated by seeds or stem cuttings.

Culinary Uses

The leaves can be used in soups, Vietnamese spring rolls or stir-fried with meat.

Turmeric

Scientific Name
Curcuma longa



Cultivation

Turmeric grows well in fertile, loamy soil that drains well.

Plant Care and Growth

This plant thrives in both full sun and semi-shade, and requires lots of water. It can be propagated by division.

Culinary Uses

The rhizomes are used in soups, curry bases and teas, as a seasoning and as a colouring for rice. The leaves are used to wrap fish paste to give a pleasant aroma to the food.