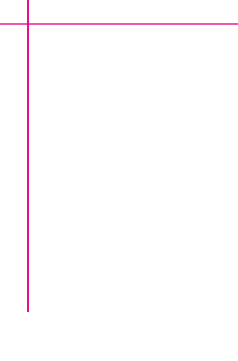
MONTANA Harvest of the Month

Herbs



Cilantro

Basil

Did You Know

Oregano

- Herbs are often defined as the leaves and flowers of plants that are used for flavor, fragrance, or medicine.
- The part of the plant used defines it as an herb or a spice. For example, when using the green leaves of the plant *Coriandrum sativum*, it is the herb cilantro, and when using the seeds, it is the spice coriander.
- Although herbs are not a large part of Montana's agricultural landscape, the number of Montana farms producing herbs has increased substantially over the last 10 years.
- Wild mint and beebalm (wild bergamot) are herbs native to Montana. Traditionally, mint tea was so commonly drunk amongst Apsaalooke (Crow) people, that one of the Apsaalooke words for "mint" is the same as the word for "tea." Mint tea was also brewed by Chippewa-Cree people to treat colds, headaches, coughs, and fevers. Sélish (Salish), Ktunaxa (Kootenai), and Qaeisp'e (Pend d'Oreilles) tribes used beebalm for medicinal purposes, including to cure colds and treat mouth and throat infections.

Chives

Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:

www.mtharvestofthemonth.org

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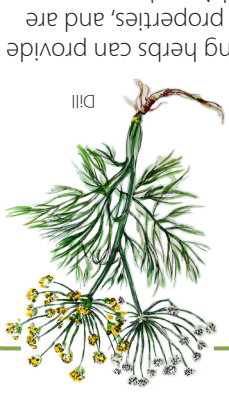
Sage



Dill

Nutrition Information

Although herbs are normally consumed in small quantities, adding herbs can provide many health benefits. Herbs contain vitamins, anti-inflammatory properties, and are rich in antioxidants. Many herbs are a source of Vitamins C, K, and A, and numerous studies have shown positive health impacts of consuming certain herbs, such as lowering cholesterol and protecting against cancer. Herbs can also be used to enhance flavor without adding sugar, salt, or fat.

Buying Tips

Select herbs that are free of disease, discoloration, or damage. Purchase only enough herbs for immediate use, unless planning to dry or freeze them. Gently wash and dry herbs after harvest or purchase. Trim the bases of the stems, place them in a jar with an inch of water, cover loosely with a plastic bag, then transfer to the refrigerator. Freeze or dry herbs that will not be used within a week after purchase.

Cooking

Herbs are a healthy way to make food more flavorful. It is important to note that the general rule for fresh to dried herbs is about 3 to 1. So, use 1 Tbsp of dried sage for every 3 Tbsp of fresh sage. Try garnishing meat and eggs with parsley. Add bay leaves to soup while it is simmering. Make unique infused oils or salad dressings. Experiment with quantity and variety to determine your favorite herb combinations!

The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, Montana Organic Association, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

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