



HOW TO DRY HERBS

**BEST
SELLER**

THE COMPLETE **DIY HERB DRYING** GUIDE

Sally Ann Johnson

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The Complete DIY Herb Drying Guide

By Sally Ann Johnson

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From The Author

Introduction

Growing a garden is a common activity for people from all walks of life. It doesn't matter if you live in an apartment, in the suburbs or on a big spread of land. Gardening is an enjoyable activity that gets you outside while getting a little exercise. It is also a way to supplement your groceries without running up your grocery bill. Growing herbs is another way to supplement your pantry without spending any money.

You don't have to have land to grow an herb garden. Growing herbs in containers on the window sill or outside

on the patio or deck is perfectly doable and really quite easy. You will soon discover that all herbs are quite prolific. You will be blessed with more herbs than you could possibly use before they started to go bad. That is okay!

You cannot deny the pleasure you get from growing items. It is a special thrill that only a gardener would understand. Oh, you need some basil for that recipe? Head out to your garden or pluck it off the plant in your window! It gives you something to be proud of when you can say you grew the ingredients of a favourite dish.

This book will show you how to dry the

herbs so you can use them for years to come. Fresh herbs are lovely, but cooking with dried herbs is often preferable. Drying herbs is fairly straightforward, but there are a few things you will need to know in order to do it right. This book will give you all of the important details about drying herbs as well as explain the necessary storage requirements of your dried herbs. Oh, and, what good are dried herbs without a few recipes to add them to? You will find a handful of delicious recipes that are sure to please the whole family.

Chapter 1

What Is Herb Drying?

Herb drying is just like it sounds. It is the art of drying fresh herbs from the garden. And it is an art. You cannot simply pluck some herbs and toss them on the counter to dry overnight. Drying herbs is something that has been passed down for generations.

Drying herbs gives you the chance to preserve the bounty of your herb garden. Because herbs are very aromatic, a little goes a long way. A single plant will produce more than you could use in an average week. Regular harvesting of the

plant ensures you will always have a fresh supply growing. If you don't use the fresh herbs, drying them gives you the chance to put them away for a later day.

Herb drying is a slow process that allows the plant to retain the majority of its flavour. It is crucial the plant isn't dried too fast. Imagine your favourite cut of meat marinating in the fridge overnight or a barrel of wine being given the time to sit and ferment. These practices bring out the flavours and give the flavours time to blend. Drying herbs is very similar. You want to give the herb bunches time to dry and slowly lock in that specific taste that makes a particular herb so desirable.

Using dried herbs that you have grown and put through the drying process is one way you can guarantee the quality and safety of your food. Too often, there are recalls due to food not being properly packaged or coming into contact with harmful bacteria. Dried herbs do not carry those same risks, especially when you do it all in your own home.

Chapter 2

The Benefits Of Herb Drying At Home

There are numerous benefits to drying the herbs you grow at home. If you are somebody who likes the idea of having a well-stocked pantry, a plethora of dried herbs is certainly appealing. Along with that reason, there are several other reasons you will want to learn how to dry herbs in the comfort of your own home.

Cost



Take a look in your spice cabinet right now. You probably have no less than 10 different spices and herb bottles right now. Each of those bottles, depending on brand name, probably cost you a couple of dollars each. Imagine how much money you could save by not purchasing the spices needed to make your meals delicious. You would have the luxury of adding as much as you wanted without worrying about how much it is costing you.

Satisfaction



There is supreme satisfaction in growing, harvesting and then using food you have grown yourself. It gives you bragging rights. When somebody complements a dish you have made, you can proudly tell them the secret is the herbs in which you grew yourself. Tending a garden, even if it is a small one with just a few containers is somewhat therapeutic. A few minutes a day with your herbs will make you feel better.

Aroma



Drying herbs give of a pleasant aroma that trumps any commercially produced air freshener. Your home will smell delightful. Drying oregano, basil and even peppermint smell absolutely wonderful. You will feel as if you are walking into your favourite restaurant every day. The aromas eliminate many of the smells we often pay to mask. You won't have to worry about spraying an aerosol spray in the room before guests arrive or burning candles in the hopes you can cover an unpleasant odour.

Quality Control

When you pluck your herbs from your own plants, you know exactly where

they have been and what has been applied to the plant and soil. You can pick the best leaves and stems and discard the ones you don't like. You have complete control over the quality of the herbs you dry, store and serve your family. You don't have to worry about the herbs being contaminated or getting a bad batch. Organic is very important to many people. Herbs are very easy to grow and really they don't need any fertilizers. They are natural pest repellents and don't need to be treated with any chemicals. Growing your own organic herbs ensures you have complete control over what is being put into your food.

Convenience

Stopping a recipe right in the middle to run to the store to grab a particular ingredient is irritating and could potentially ruin the dish. Having a one-stop shopping centre on your patio or windowsill makes it easy for you to keep a steady supply of the herbs and spices you use to cook with. You won't have to worry about running out and being forced to run to the store or doing without a particular flavour in a recipe. Having a supply of fresh and dried herbs is a convenience that will make you wonder how you ever managed without it.

Chapter 3

Dried VS Fresh Herbs



Now, you are probably wondering why you would dry your herbs when fresh has always been promoted as being better. In many ways fresh is better—for certain herbs and recipes.

When you use fresh and dried herbs will often depend on what you are cooking and what the recipe calls for. Typically, anything that is cooked slowly will call for dried herbs. Dried herbs are more powerful and pack more flavour. Allowing dried herbs to slow cook in a recipe gives you the best flavour distribution. It gives the herbs time to blend with the other ingredients and enhances the dish.

Fresh herbs are typically added at the last minute, just before serving. Think chives on a baked potato. Fresh chives should be added once the cooking is done. The flavour of fresh herbs is much more mild than dried herbs that can border on bitter if too much is used.

Imagine putting fresh leaves, stems or other pieces from your fresh herbs into a bowl of soup. It certainly doesn't sound or look very appetizing does it? When you dry the herbs before adding them to your recipes, the herbs will be much easier to blend with other ingredients and will not take on a slimy quality.

It is important you pay close attention to

a recipe. If it calls for dried herbs and you want to replace it with fresh, you will need to double the amount of fresh herbs you add. When recipes are created, the amount of spice used is a crucial part of the overall flavour outcome. Because dried herbs are much more flavourful than their fresh counterparts, you must be careful you don't add too much and end up overpowering the rest of the ingredients. If a recipe calls for fresh herbs, only use half the quantity if using dried—possibly less.

If you are drying your own herbs, they are likely to be more flavourful than what you would purchase in the store.

This is especially true if your dried herbs are relatively fresh. When cooking, dried herbs tend to be the most common and fresh herbs are used for garnishment. It is a little tough to work fresh herbs are often very weed-like into a meal. You would be serving bits and pieces of stems and leaves that would not be appealing. This is why dried herbs are more common and a favourite for cooks.

Chapter 4

Harvesting And Handling Herbs The Right Way

Before you start randomly plucking and pulling your herbs from the pot or garden, you need to understand the right way to harvest your herbs in order to allow the herbs to continue to grow.

Harvesting Tips

*Throughout the growing season, cut off “branches” of the plant making sure you never cut off more than one third of the stem at a time. Many herbs grow flower-type heads similar to that of a broccoli

plant. Cutting off these bunches when they are ready allows the plant to continue to produce more bunches throughout the season.

*If your herb garden is outdoors, make your cuttings mid-morning after the dew has dried and before the sun has time to heat the oils in the plants.

*If you are gathering the seeds from the herb, like coriander or dill seed, wait until the flower head is completely dry before harvesting. The head should be dry and brittle and

the seeds will easily drop when shaken.

*If you are harvesting the leaves of a particular herb, the best time to do so is right when the flowers start to form. This is when the leaves are most flavourful.

Handling

Herbs are rather delicate. Following proper handling procedures ensures your herbs make it through the drying process with most of the flavour in tact.

*Do not crush the plant stems or leaves when you are

harvesting. This releases the flavour.

*Harvest in bunches whenever possible for easier drying.

*Gently lay the harvest plants in a basket as you make your way through the garden to avoid the plants breaking or flowers and seeds dropping.

Drying

Drying herbs is fairly simple.

1. If necessary, gently wash the herbs before drying.

2. Use string or a rubber band to tie the base of the stems together to form a bouquet of sorts.

3. Hang the herb bunches from an herb drying rack or use the string and wrap around a hook to hang upside down.

4. Hang herb bunches somewhere out of direct sunlight. In a pantry, the corner of a kitchen or in a closet is ideal.

5. When herbs crumble upon touching, they are ready for

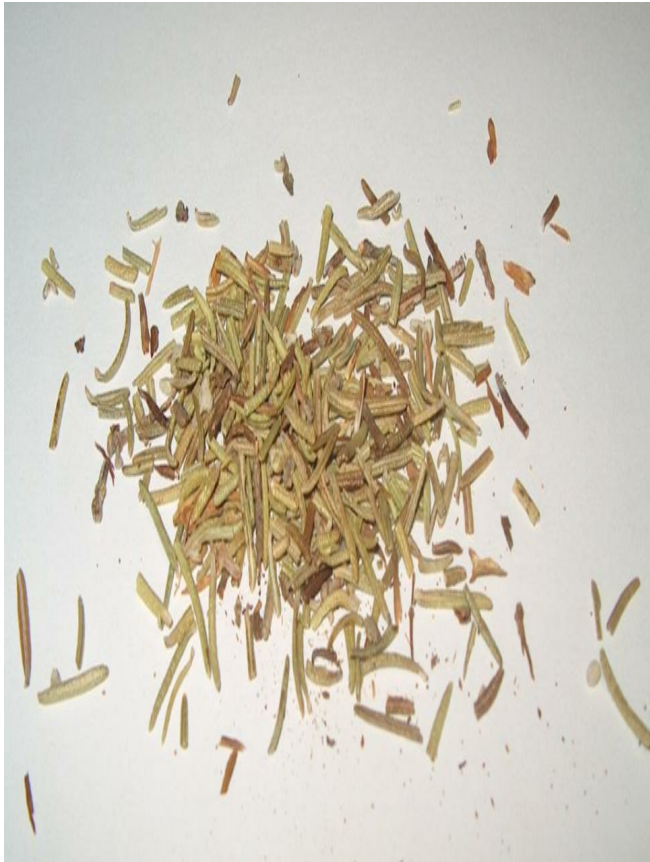
storage.

You can put the herb bunches inside a paper bag to ensure you are not losing any of the bits and pieces in the drying process. Placing a plate or bowl under an individual herb bunch is also helpful to catching falling pieces. If you are harvesting seed heads, this is crucial. The seeds will drop very easily.

You can use the microwave or the oven to dry your herbs if you do not want to wait a couple of weeks. However, the quality may not be quite as high as if you did the slow, hanging method. You can also dry herbs in a food dehydrator if you have a lot and don't want to wait.

Chapter 5

The Easiest And Most Useful Herbs You Can Dry At Home



There are plenty of herbs that you can grow in your garden, but there are some that are much easier to grow and tend to be a little more commonly used in various recipes than others. Some herbs, like chives, are not great for drying. They are best used fresh. A rule of thumb is that herbs that are very aromatic during the growing process are going to make the best herbs for drying.

Herbs You Can Dry at Home

This is a list of the top herbs to dry at home based on the quality of the herb after it has dried and the regular use of the herb in recipes and daily cooking.

- Oregano
- Thyme
- Cilantro
- Rosemary
- Basil
- Lemon grass
- Tarragon
- Dill seeds
- Sage
- Bay leaf

Herbs that are best fresh are as follows. You can dry these, but they tend to lose some of their flavour and can taste a bit like weeds or eating stems.

- Chives
- Dill weed
- Parsley

There are plenty of other herbs that can be grown in the garden and dried, like peppermint for example, but are not regularly used in cooking. However, these herbs are often used for teas or for their medicinal qualities. You are not limited to the above mentioned herbs. Some spices come from roots, like

garlic for example. These can be grown in containers, but are best grown in an outdoor garden.

When you are choosing herbs to grow, think about the dishes you cook the most. Are you a big fan of Italian dishes? If so, you are going to use a lot of oregano and cilantro. If you cook a lot of red meat, you will want plenty of thyme. Poultry lovers will want to have sage and rosemary readily available.

Some herbs, like dill weed and rosemary, are best dried and then ground just before adding to the dish. The herbs tend to be a little difficult to chew without feeling like you are chewing on

a stick. Grinding the stems up just before adding into a recipe will give you the rich flavour you are looking for without picking bits and pieces out of your teeth.

Check out the chart below to see what herbs you are most likely to use in your own kitchen. There is really no point in growing an herb you will never use!

Cilantro	Salads, salsa, sauces, soup, eggs, and dressings.
Coriander	Pickling, sausages, stocks, pork, curry, gingerbread, salsa, and dressings.
Dill	Seed: pickling, soups, sauerkraut, marinade. Herb: salads, soups, fish & shellfish, vegetables, sauces, and vinegar.
Mint	Lamb, fruits, tea, fruit beverages, peas, carrots, potatoes, jellies, soups, and sauces.
Oregano	Italian & Mexican dishes, tomato sauces, soups, sauces, stews, meats, salads, and marinades.
Rosemary	Lamb, fish, beef, sauces, soups, stews, salads, and marinades.
Sage	Stuffing, meat, poultry, soups, stews, salads, and fish.
Thyme	Soups, chowders, stocks, sauces, meats, poultry, and salad dressing.
Tarragon	Béarnaise sauce, vinegar, chicken, fish, salads, dressings, and eggs.
Bay leaf	Stocks, sauces, soup, stews, and braised meats.
Basil	Tomato dishes, pesto, egg dishes, salads, marinades, fish, and compound butters.
Lemongrass	Asian dishes, soups, stews, marinades and any recipes that are enhanced with a lemon flavour.

Chapter 6

How To Use Dried Herbs



Dried herbs should be used in dishes that require slow cooking. You want to rehydrate the herbs slowly, to bring out their flavour. Adding dried herbs at the end of the recipe will not give you much flavour. In fact, you will be able to taste the crunchiness of the herb, but very little flavour.

One trick that many beginner cooks do not know, is the herbs release their flavour when they are crushed. Instead of sprinkling oregano into a pot of spaghetti sauce, you must first dump a bit into your palm. Then gently crush the herb and sprinkle it into the dish. This is the best way to maximize the burst of

flavour from the herb.

Add the herbs at the beginning of the cooking session or at the very latest, at the mid-point. The slow rehydrating and release of the flavours of the herb will allow it to blend with the food it is supposed to be adding flavour to.

If a recipe calls for fresh herbs and you don't have any, you can substitute your dried herbs in their place. If a recipe calls for a tablespoon of fresh oregano, only use about a teaspoon. Any time fresh herbs are called for in a recipe, they will be put in towards the end. Read the entire recipe before hand so you will know what dried herbs you

need to add in the beginning.

Dried herbs that are more than six months old will have lost some of their potency. You may need to add a bit more to get the desired taste. Just be sure to add a little at a time and give the herbs at least 30 minutes to release their flavour before adding more. You don't want to overdo it. Do not add any more dried herbs to a recipe beyond the halfway cooking point. The herbs will typically not have the time needed to fully rehydrate and add the desired taste you are going for.

You can also use a process that is often referred to as sweating herbs. Since

most recipes include olive oil or vegetable oil, you can add your herbs to the oil to help them release their flavours. You will need to heat the oil over very low heat for several minutes with the dried herbs in it. When it is time, add the oil to the recipe. You will get the flavour of the herbs without having to slowly cook a recipe.

Chapter 7

How To Store Your Dried Herbs



The storage of your dried herbs is extremely important. Storing them improperly can ultimately ruin the herbs and make them flavourless and nothing more than decoration in your meals. You don't want to go through all the work of growing, harvesting and drying to end up wasting the herbs.

These tips will ensure you get the most out of your herbs.

*Dried herbs begin to lose their potency after 6 months. You can certainly store them for longer, but you will take into account the weakened flavour when using them in

recipes. After a year, the herbs will likely be extremely weak in flavour.

*Store herbs in glass containers with lids. Plastic will suffice as well. You can use old Mason jars or even reuse spice containers you bought at the store. These are actually very handy because they already have the proper lid for sprinkling a spice into your meal.

*Store your spices in a pantry. You don't want to leave them lined up on a window sill or

even across the stove if the stove gets a lot of direct sunlight. Sunlight and light in general will heat the spices and cause them to release their flavour. When you go to use them, they will already have released their flavour and will be much weaker.

*Do not store your spices in a cupboard that is close to the stove or the refrigerator. These appliances generate heat. Again, heat is an enemy for your dried herbs. The heat will also create humidity, which you do not want to have

your spices exposed to.

*When you add a new batch of dried herbs to your storage, monitor it for a couple of days. If the herbs are not totally dry and you seal the herbs in a container, they will mould. If your herbs mould, you will need to throw out the entire container full.

*Do not crush leaves of the herb you are going to store. Gently place the leaves in the jar and put away for storage. When it is time to add the herbs to your recipe, crush

them in the palm of your hand or use a mortar and pestle just before mixing them in.

*Do not store your herbs in paper or cardboard containers. The oils of the plant will be absorbed by the container and ultimately leave the herbs flavourless.

Chapter 8

Great Mixed Dried Herb Recipes

There are literally hundreds of herb combinations you can create with your dried herbs. Everybody will have different taste preferences. The key is to tweak a recipe until it is perfectly suited for your particular taste desires.

Check out some of these recipes. These combos are sure to enhance any meal.

Rubs

Lamb/Pork Rub

- 1 1/2 Tbs. whole fennel seeds
- 2 Tbs. whole black peppercorns
- 1 Tbs. dried lavender
- 1 Tbs. dried rosemary
- 2 Tbs. dried thyme
- 2 Tbs. dried oregano
- 1 Tbs. dried marjoram
- 2 Tbs. red chili flakes

- 2 Tbs. sugar
- 4 Tbs. coarse salt

In a small skillet, heat the fennel seeds and black peppercorns for about three minutes over medium heat. Remove from heat and spread out on a baking sheet and allow to cool. Once cool, mix in the remaining ingredients except the salt and sugar and grind. Add the salt and sugar and mix well.

Spicy Rub

- 1/2 cup paprika
- 3 tbsps cayenne pepper

- 5 tbsps ground black pepper
- 6 tbsps garlic powder
- 3 tbsps onion powder
- 6 tbsps salt
- 2 1/2 tbsps dried oregano
- 2 1/2 tbsps dried thyme

Blend all ingredients together and store in a jar. Use on your favourite cut of red meat.

Italian Rub

- 2 tbsps brown sugar

- 2 tbsps sea salt
- 2 tbsps dried oregano
- 2 tbsps dried basil
- 2 tbsps dried parsley

Blend herbs together and use as a rub for poultry. Goes well with pork as well.

Perfect Hamburger Rub

- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons sea salt
- 2 tablespoons paprika

- 2 tablespoons ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried sage
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper
- 1 pinch chili powder
- 1 pinch dried thyme

Blend all of the dried herbs together in a

small jar. Season hamburgers while cooking on the grill with the rub.

Rib-Eye Rosemary Rub

- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Blend spices and use to rub on rib-eyes before grilling.

Butters

Mint Butter

- 1 tablespoon dried mint
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cube of butter

Allow butter to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or until softened. Add in the mint and mix well. Add the lemon juice a teaspoon at a time. Allow mixture to stand at room temperature for another 2 hours for flavours to blend. Is an excellent addition to lamb, potatoes or peas.

Herb Blend Butter

- 3/4 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 3/4 teaspoon dried chervil
- 3/4 teaspoon dried dill
- 3/4 teaspoon dried chives
- 3/4 teaspoon dried mint
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cube butter

Allow butter to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or until softened. Add in the dried herbs and mix well. Add the lemon juice a teaspoon at a time. Allow mixture to stand at room

temperature for another 2 hours for flavours to blend. This is an excellent addition to broiled fish, noodles or broiled tomatoes.

Basil Vegetable Butter

- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 ½ teaspoons of dried parsley
- 1 cube butter

Allow butter to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or until softened. Add in the dried herbs and mix well. Makes a lovely addition to steamed veggies.

Sage Poultry Butter

- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1/2 teaspoon dried celery leaves or 1/4 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 teaspoon onion juice
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 cube butter

Allow butter to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or until softened. Add in the dried herbs and mix well. Add the lemon juice a teaspoon at a time. Allow mixture to stand at room

temperature for another 2 hours for flavours to blend. Use with poultry dishes, veal or lamb.

Tarragon Butter

- 2 teaspoons dried tarragon
- 1-1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cube butter

Allow butter to stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or until softened. Add in the dried herbs and mix well. Add the lemon juice a teaspoon at

a time. Allow mixture to stand at room temperature for another 2 hours for flavours to blend. Goes great with fish or lamb dishes.

Seasoning

Spicy Seasoning

- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 teaspoons ground savory
- 2 teaspoons onion powder

- 2 teaspoons dried sage
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 2 teaspoons ground mace
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika

Blend all ingredients in a small bowl.

Store in a seasoning jar and use instead of salt when flavouring your meal.

Salad Seasoning

- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 teaspoons dried chives
- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- 2 teaspoons paprika

- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Mix all ingredients together. Shake over fresh salad greens or on top of cooked pasta for a low-calorie flavour enhancer.

Universal Seasoning Blend

- 1 Tbsp. onion powder
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder

- 1 Tbsp. dried parsley flakes
- 1 tsp. dried basil leaves
- 1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
- 1 tsp. dried marjoram leaves
- 1 tsp. white pepper

Mix all ingredients and store in a shaker. Add to your Italian dishes, meats, stews and soups.

Taco Seasoning

- 1/4 cup instant minced onion

- 2 Tbsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 2 tsp. crushed dried red pepper flakes
- 1-1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dried marjoram
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp. instant minced garlic

- 1 tsp. ground cumin

Blend all ingredients together. Add a teaspoon to ground beef or shredded chicken to be used on tacos.

Garlic Seasoning

- 2 tablespoons marjoram
- 2 tablespoons oregano
- 2 tablespoons rosemary
- 2 tablespoons basil
- 2 tablespoons parsley flakes
- 1 tablespoon onion powder

- 1 tablespoon thyme
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

Blend all ingredients together and store in a jar or sealed bag. Use in tomato dishes or with poultry.

Herb-Infused Oils

Infused oils are very popular in upscale kitchens. However, when fresh herbs are used to infuse the oil, the oil needs to be used within a couple of days to prevent bacteria growth. Using dried herbs will

extend the shelf life of your infused oils for up to a year when stored correctly.

Italian Herb Oil

- 3 leaves basil
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ½ teaspoon rosemary
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 1 1/2 cups extra virgin olive oil

Add herbs to the oil. Seal in a jar or bottle and let sit overnight. Use to dip bread in.

Rosemary Oil

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary

Blend the rosemary into the olive oil and let sit overnight. Use as a dressing on meat or drizzle over roasted red potatoes. Add a pinch of red pepper flakes if you like a little heat.

Basil Oil

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried basil

Blend oil and basil together in a jar or

bottle. Use the infused oil in place of standard olive oil in recipes.

Conclusion

Growing your own herbs is a rewarding activity that will bring you great pleasure. It is exciting to experiment with a variety of recipes that you have created with your own taste preferences in mind. There are so many combinations you can create with your very own dried herbs. Because herbs are so prolific, a little trial and error with blending herbs won't cost you a fortune.

Drying your own herbs and creating delicious spice blends, rubs and butters can become a lucrative hobby. You can sell your dried herbs and give them

away as gifts for friends and family members. It is one way to thank those around you while giving them something that is truly a labour of love. Infused oils in pretty bottles are an excellent addition to any kitchen décor. The herbs will begin to plump up as they sit in the oil and with the yellow of the oil and the green of the herbs, you create a mini-masterpiece.

Head into any home improvement store and pick up the seeds you need to start your own herb garden. There are a variety of containers that can be purchased for indoor herb growing. There are whimsical, classic and artistic pots that are all suitable for indoor and

outdoor herb gardens.

Don't delay another day! Get started growing your herbs so you can begin the drying process within a few short months!

From The Author

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. As an author, I understand the importance of creating books which my readers will find both enjoyable and informative. If you have the time and feel generous, please don't hesitate to leave an honest review of this book.....Sally Ann Johnson



Thank You!