

Entertainment



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This herb garden of mint, dill, and chives can easily be grown by maintenance. The fragrance will be as appealing as the gastronomical uses of the herbs. Enjoy.

Let the kids spice up your garden

By JO ANN STEVENSON
Times Staff Writer

If your youngsters want their own garden and insist on trying out weird varieties they see on seed counters, read on.

A circular herb garden measuring only two or three feet in diameter can be dug almost anywhere in your lawn and made decorative not only by the attractiveness of the plants but with the addition of favorite rocks and driftwood youngsters usually possess.

The beauty of herbs is that they require little maintenance, once they're established (such as watering only once a week). The small fry will lose interest — it's inevitable — but they will still feel the pride of harvest when cutting time comes around.

At harvest time, they can be cut and hung to dry. Then, the crushed leaves will make great inexpensive Christmas gifts for gourmet chefs.

Many of the local nurseries and farmers' stands carry herbs, but parsley and chives are the most common. Hertridges carries some of the more scarce seeds like summer savory, dill, thyme, basil and marjoram.

Thyme is a perennial that can withstand Mississauga's winters, thriving in dry light soil in full sun. It spreads quickly, so pruning is important. Dry the parts you prune for later use in the kitchen. No pesticides are needed with herbs — they contain their own pest repellent.

Fresh or dried thyme adds flavor to soups, gravies, and vegetable juices. Dried thyme makes fish and poultry taste fragrant and tangy.

Strip off the leaves and store them in airtight containers until your next crop comes back in the spring.

Mint grows so easily it's wise to plant it in a pot even outdoors. Take a cutting or a root from seedlings purchased in a nursery as it does not start well from seed. Mint likes partial sun and moisture.

Chives also will survive the great outdoors during winter months. To use chives, trim off the tops no lower than four inches and they'll replace themselves. If you don't want to grow a pot of chives indoors in the winter, wrap some in plastic and freeze.

Dill must be planted from seeds each year, preferring a sunny location. Dill has a yellow-green flower with a lacy look. Collect the seeds before they fall in the late summer and use its leaves

fresh (preferably before the flowers open).

Sage is another versatile herb that is hardy enough for our weather. Sage prefers dry soil in full sun. Seeds take three to four weeks to sprout. As sage blossoms, cut back the woody stems and new branches will form with new leaves.

Too much watering can kill sage so go easy. Rain-fall is often enough. Sage goes well in beans of all types, peas and tomatoes. Use them fresh or dried in stuffings, sausage and lamb and poultry. Dried leaves should be crushed and stored in an airtight container.

Garden books to leaf through

By EDNA TOTH

Mississauga library system has books to thumb through for just about every green thumb in Mississauga:

Gardens that look lovely in the sunlight can appear just as beautiful after dark by careful installation of a few outdoor lights. Stanley Schuler has written a book, *Outdoor Lighting for Your Home*, which discusses colors to use, where to place them (including underwater) and how to beat bugs.

It's easy to read, includes chapters on lighting basketball courts and putting in greens.

The *Complete Book of Garden and Outdoor Lighting* by Bernard Gladstone tells you how to do installation yourself (safely) as well as how to choose effective lighting.

Trees shaped to form an archway, bird shapes, pyramids or cones, can add interesting accents to any garden.

The *Art of Shaping Shrubs, Trees and Plants*, by Tatsuo and Kiyoko Ishimoto, contains photos from all over the world of incredible things that have been shaped from growing materials.

There are pictures from San Francisco of ivy trained to grow over the lifeline shape of a goat, a cork-screw boxwood from Copenhagen, a parade of pyramid boxwood at Versailles, and Japanese pine shapes from Takamatsu.

If your hedge won't trim quietly, this is the book to snip it into shape.

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If mazes amaze you, take a look at *Mazes and Labyrinths*, their history and development, by W. H. Matthews.

Matthews has looked at mazes from famous Hampton Court, England, which consists of hedges, to stone mazes unearthed by archaeologists in Finland.

In between, if your lawn is giving you trouble, you might take a look at pages 71 to 99, and pass off your greenery as a turf maze.

Garden Construction in Pictures by Adrienne and Peter Oldale is precisely what its title says. There are explanatory photos of how to drain a garden, how to prepare soil, how to lay turf, how to plant a tree, make a rustic gate, install steps, fences, trellises and put in a concrete walk.

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