

## Keeping Herbs

**Drying** – Drying is the most effective way to keep many herbs. To dry herbs, harvest long stems where ever possible. Wash then thoroughly and shake off as much water as possible. Fasten several stalks together (no more that six!) at the bottom with elastic bands. Insert a twist tie through the elastic and use it to suspend the herbs upside down in a dark, dry place – not in the sun!!! When herbs are completely dry, place the entire stalk in plastic bag or a plastic container and store in a cool, dry place. DO NOT remove the leaves from the stalks or crumble the leaves until you are ready to use them. This preserves the natural essential oils present in the leaves.

Herbs that dry well:

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Mint       | Basil       |
| Lemon Balm | Sage        |
| Oregano    | Sweet Annie |
| Catmint    |             |

**Freezing**-some herbs don't dry well, and freezing is a good alternative for them. Harvest and wash as for drying and place herbs, stems and all, in a plastic freezer bag and place in the freezer. To use, remove the bag from the freezer and crumble off the amount you want to use. Replace bag in freezer.

Another method for freezing that is particularly good with parsley is to put the herbs in the blender with some water and blend them together. Freeze the mixture in ice cube trays. Once frozen, the 'herb cubes' can be removed from the trays and kept in plastic bags. Add a cube or two to soups, stews, etc.

Herbs that freeze well:

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| Parsley* | Chive        |
| Thyme    | Garlic chive |
| Mints    |              |

\*We have tried for years to dry parsley and have not been able to preserve the color and flavor of fresh parsley.

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