

Riverside School Herb Garden Guide to Boxed Garden

Please note the herbs in the boxes are all safe to pick, smell, and taste, however, they are not all food. Some have very strong medicinal properties. Please taste only those plants you know are meant to be eaten.

1. Basil

Native to the Middle East

Basil is widely used as a cooking herb, especially in tomato dishes. We use a lot on “Pesto Day”, when fourth graders harvest the herb and salad greens for a feast. Medicinally, it is an excellent digestive system support herb.

2. Curled Leaf Parsley

Native to Northern Europe and Western Asia

Widely eaten and may be made into tea. Parsley is good for the kidneys. It stimulates appetite, reduces fevers, is good for bad breath and scavenges free radicals. At Riverside we plant a lot extra because it is a fodder plant for the black swallowtail butterfly caterpillar.

3. Sage

Native to Southern Europe

A key ingredient in herb stuffing at Thanksgiving time. Sage was used to kill cold and flu germs, may be used as a gargle. It is preservative, antifungal, anti-inflammatory. The leaves may be used fresh or dried for tea.

4. Lavender

Native to the Mediterranean

Lavender oil is used to relieve muscle spasms, nervousness, and headache and is prized for its very diverse healing properties. Lavender is antibacterial and anti-fungal, and the oil is soothing for burns and bug bites. Dried flowers and oil may be used as a carminative (good for gas) and are used in sachets and moth repellants. Third graders use it for sweet bags.

5. Chives

Varieties are found native to Europe, North America and China. Chives is used in cooking for its delicate onion flavor. Chives is a traditional Asian remedy for cold and lung congestion.

6. Catmint

Native to Europe and Asia

Nepeta or Catmint is here for cats who love its minty smell.

7. See lavender, box 4.

8. Rosemary

Native to the Mediterranean

Rosemary is used as a culinary herb, especially with meats. The leaves may be used in bath mixtures and aromatic preparations. The fresh or dried leaves may be used as tea for stomach ache and gas.

9. Nasturtiums

Native to South America, especially Peru and Bolivia

The leaves and flowers are edible and may be used for salad or garnish. They have a spicy, radishy flavor.

10. Sweet Marjoram

Native to southern Europe

Marjoram is cultivated for its aromatic leaves, either green or dry, for culinary purposes; the tops are cut as the plants begin to flower and are dried slowly in the shade. It is related to oregano.

11. Dill

Native to Southern Europe and Western Asia

Dill is used primarily as a culinary herb, especially in Scandinavian and central European cuisine. It has been known to provide digestive aid and was traditionally used in children's digestive medicines.

12. Sorrel

Native to Europe and Asia

Bitter and sour, sorrel has been used as a diuretic, laxative and antiseptic.

The young leaf is edible and prized for its lemony tang in salad; it is used by the French for soup. Sorrel is meant to be eaten in small quantities.

13. Lemon Balm a.k.a. Melissa

Native to the Mediterranean

The tea made from lemon balm is a great stress reliever. Its medicinal uses also include support for the digestive tract, "winter illnesses", and strengthening of the immune system.

14. Thyme

Native to the Mediterranean

Widely used in cooking for tomato dishes, thyme is delicious in stews and chowders.

It is used edicinally for cough and congestion. Thyme is anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, and antiviral. Its oil is used in modern day European hospitals for cleaning. Thyme improves digestion and relaxes muscles. The dried flowers and leaves may be used as tea.

15. Origanum

Native to Europe and Central Asia

Oregano is used in tomato dishes, eggs and beans. It is antiseptic, expectorant, aids digestion and muscle spasm. May be taken as a tisane (infusion of fresh leaves).

16. Garlic Chives

Native to Asia

Garlic chives can be used as you would use regular chives, although they have a garlic flavor. The lovely white flowers are edible. The Chinese used them traditionally to reduce fatigue.

17. Peppermint

Native to Europe

Used in many desserts and confections and gum. Helps with indigestion. Peppermint is antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal. Tea is good for nervous headaches and agitation.

18. Tarragon

Native to Southern Europe

Widely used as flavoring for salads, steak, fish, herb butters, vinegar and especially chicken.