



# Blue Owl Garden Emporium

## Growing Mediterranean Herbs in Ohio's Non-Mediterranean Climate

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### SAGE:

Common Sage, Garden Sage, Dalmatian Sage - *Salvia officinalis* Lamiaceae

Native to the northern Mediterranean shore from Spain to the E. side of the Adriatic, including Croatia and Dalmatia. Grows on limestone outcroppings with very little soil. Sage can be grown from seed, but the resulting plants will vary widely in quality. Sage is easily propagated vegetatively with cuttings. After the first season, cut plants back by at least 1/3 just before new growth starts to keep them compact and to provide good air circulation. Full sun and extremely good drainage is preferred; pH neutral to alkaline.

Hardy to zone 4.



Spanish Sage, Lavender Sage - *Salvia lavandulifolia*, *S. hispanorum* Lamiaceae

Native to mountainous areas of Spain, on rocky slopes and hillsides. Used as garden sage in Spain. Grow as you would common sage, the main difference being that it seems to come truer from seed. A common adulterant in imported dried sage products.

Hardy to zone 5.



### LAVENDER:

English Lavender, Common Lavender, True Lavender, Lavender Vera - *Lavandula angustifolia*, *Lavandula officinale* Lamiaceae

Native to the Mediterranean; found on calcareous (alkaline) soils at high altitudes on exposed dry grassy or rocky slopes. Grows in full sun on extremely well-drained gravelly or rocky loam, neutral to alkaline pH. Good air circulation is critical to prevent sudden wilt caused by root rot during hot, humid summers, light-colored mulch such as gravel or sand can help in this regard. Cut back by 1/2 in early spring before fresh growth starts to increase air circulation around roots. There are hundreds, thousands?, of cultivars, some more hardy than others. Can be grown from seed, but cultivars must be propagated vegetatively.

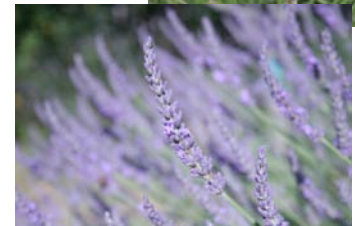
Hardy to zone 5-6, depending on the selected cultivar.



Lavandin - *Lavandula x intermedia* Lamiaceae

Sterile *Lavandula angustifolia* x *Lavandula laterifolia* hybrid, yielding plants that are hardier than *L. laterifolia* (Spike lavender) and more wilt resistant than *L. angustifolia*. Cultivation requirements are similar to English lavender but it is more robust and tolerant of humid climates.

Hardy to zone 5-6.

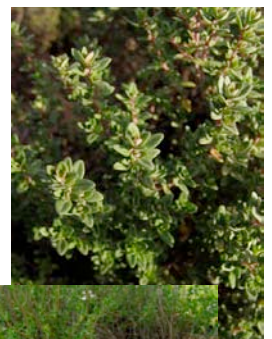


### THYME:

Lemon Thyme - *Thymus citriodorus* Lamiaceae

Originally thought to be a hybrid of *Thymus vulgaris* x *Thymus pulegioides*, DNA analysis has recently determined it to be a separate species. Strong citrusy fragrance. Cultivate as you would Garden Thyme.

Hardy to zone 6.



Common Thyme, Garden Thyme, French Thyme, German Winter Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris* Lamiaceae

Native from the western end of the Mediterranean to SE Italy. Grows on dry slopes and rocky areas, primarily limestone. Tolerates drought and nutritionally poor soils. Requires full sun and extremely well-drained, sandy or rocky soils, neutral to alkaline pH. Dislikes wet winters. Can be propagated by seed, but grows very slowly; most efficiently propagated by cuttings.

Hardy to zone 5-6.



Orange Balsam Thyme - *Thymus 'Fragrantissimus'* Lamiaceae

The taxonomy of this variety is a bit murky, but the scent is not! Strongly fragrant of both balsam and orange. Frequently grown from seed as well as propagated by cuttings. Maintain as you would Garden Thyme.

Hardy to zone 6.



**OREGANO:**

Greek Oregano - *Origanum vulgare hirtum* Lamiaceae

Native to Southern Europe, esp. Greece. Found on dry stony ground in mountainous regions. Prefers a warm, dry, well-drained location, even among rocks or gravel, with a neutral pH. Drought tolerant. This is a subspecies with exceptionally good flavor and best propagated with cuttings since seedlings may vary greatly in quality.

Hardy to zone 4-5.



Sweet Italian Oregano, Hardy Sweet Marjoram - *Origanum x majoricum* Lamiaceae

A naturally occurring hybrid of *Origanum vulgare* x *Origanum majorana*, found growing wild in Spain and Portugal. This variety inherits most of the hardiness of the former and the sweet spicy flavor of the latter. Mostly sterile, so best propagated vegetatively. It can be used as a direct substitute in cooking for Sweet Marjoram *Origanum majorana* (hardy only to zone 9). Requires much the same growing conditions as Greek Oregano above.

Hardy to zone 6.



**TARRAGON:**

French Tarragon - *Artemisia dracunculus sativa* Asteraceae

Wild tarragon is found throughout Europe and W. Asia in a variety of environments, but true French Tarragon is a selected cultivar originally made in the Middle Ages (probably in France!) and maintained. This variety is distinguished by both flavor and sterility from Russian Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus dracunculoides*), which is easily grown from seed, but singularly lacking in flavor. French Tarragon must be propagated vegetatively; any seed available on the market is for Russian Tarragon. More tolerant of slightly acidic soils (6-6.5) than other Mediterranean herbs, it prefers full sun and an extremely well-drained, coarse soil with some fertility. Air circulation is critical to combat disease. A gravel or sand mulch is desirable and division every 3-5 years helps maintain viability. Heavy and/or frequent cuttings allow for better air circulation. Susceptible to diseases caused by poor air circulation, wet conditions and/or high humidity.

Hardy to zone 5-6.



**NEPITELLA:**

Nepitella, Niebita, Lesser Calamint *Calamintha nepeta nepeta*, *C. glandulosa*, *Satureja nepeta* Lamiaceae

Found growing wild from S. Europe to N. Africa to S. Russia and Iran. Grows on dry slopes, usually on calcareous soils. Prefers dry, well-drained and sunny position with neutral to alkaline pH. This one can be difficult to find commercially and there's some disagreement on its correct botanical classification. Will reseed if conditions are appropriate.

Hardy to zone 6.



**ROSEMARY:**

Rosemary *Rosmarinus officinalis* Lamiaceae

Native to the Mediterranean region, in cultivation for thousands of years. Grows wild on sea-cliffs, dry scrub and rocky places close by the sea. Full sun, excellent drainage with good air circulation is necessary to prevent disease. Tolerates drought and very alkaline soils. Pruning helps maintain air circulation. Avoid overhead watering and mulch only with gravel or sand. It is slow-growing from seed and cultivars must be propagated with cuttings to retain their unique characteristics (such as hardiness). This is by far the most difficult to overwinter, either inside or in the field in Ohio's climate.

Hardy to zone 6-7 (select cultivars such as 'Arp' and 'Madalene Hill').



## Herb Seed, Plant & Information Sources:

| Name:                                   | Website:   | Goods:   |
|---|--|--|
| Ohio Herb Education Center              | <a href="http://www.gahanna.gov/departments/parks/herbEducationCenter.aspx">http://www.gahanna.gov/departments/parks/herbEducationCenter.aspx</a><br><a href="http://www.gahanna.gov/herbdays.aspx">http://www.gahanna.gov/herbdays.aspx</a> | Right in downtown Gahanna, OH. Offers local herbal products, books, classes on-site and hosts an annual Herb Day Celebration in early May.   |
| Companion Plants                        | <a href="http://www.companionplants.com/">http://www.companionplants.com/</a>  | Located in Athens, OH. Plants and seeds, specializing in herbs and natives; many rare, unusual species   |
| Fedco                                   | <a href="http://www.fedcoseeds.com/">http://www.fedcoseeds.com/</a>  | Seeds, seed potatoes, onions sets, seed garlic, seed starting supplies, fruit trees, bulbs, some perennial plants; organic   |
| Seed Savers Exchange                    | <a href="http://www.seedsavers.org/">http://www.seedsavers.org/</a>  | Seeds and some plants; specializes in heirloom varieties of herbs, veggies, flowers, garlic; non-profit organization promoting seed-saving and exchange; organic                           |
| Johnny's Seeds                          | <a href="http://www.johnnyseeds.com/">http://www.johnnyseeds.com/</a>  | Extensive selection of offerings for veggies, herbs, and flowers; seed starting supplies; biggest organic gardening supplier in U.S.   |
| Baker Creek                             | <a href="http://rareseeds.com/">http://rareseeds.com/</a>  | Seeds of exotic and heirloom veggies, herbs, and flowers; also publishes Heirloom Gardening magazine; open-pollinated non-GMO  |
| Millcreek Gardens LLC                   | <a href="http://www.millcreekplants.com/">http://www.millcreekplants.com/</a>  | Ohio-based wholesale herb and perennial nursery.   |
| Terroir Seeds LLC/<br>Underwood Gardens | <a href="http://www.underwoodgardens.com/">http://www.underwoodgardens.com/</a>  | Seeds and tools; heirloom flowers and veggies, unusual herbs; open-pollinated non-GMO  |
| Thyme Garden                            | <a href="http://www.thymegarden.com/">http://www.thymegarden.com/</a>  | Herb seeds and plants as well as some flowers "from the common to the exotic"; organic   |
| Richters Herbs                          | <a href="http://www.richters.com/">http://www.richters.com/</a>  | Large selection of herb seeds and plants; based in Ontario, so shipping of nursery stock can be slow   |
| Southern Exposure Seed Exchange         | <a href="http://www.southernexposure.com/">http://www.southernexposure.com/</a>  | Another seed-saving organization with emphasis on more southern varieties, but has many unusual items that will do well here; seed stock for heirloom veggies, flowers, and herbs; organic |
| Horizon Herbs                           | <a href="http://www.horizonherbs.com/">http://www.horizonherbs.com/</a>  | Specializes in rare and unusual herb seeds, also some veggies and flower, seed tubers; includes lots of info about growing from seed; organic  |
| Nichols Garden Nursery                  | <a href="https://www.nicholsgardennursery.com/">https://www.nicholsgardennursery.com/</a>  | Herbs, veggies and flowers; seeds and some plants, seed stock; many unusual varieties  |

## Books & Periodicals:

The Complete Herb Book by Jekka McVicar, 2008

The Encyclopedia of Herbs by Arthur O. Tucker & Thomas DeBaggio, 2009

Growing Herbs from Seed, Cuttings, and Root: an adventure in small miracles by Thomas DeBaggio, 2000

Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs by Editors of Rodale Press, 1987

A Modern Herbal, Vol I & II by Maud Grieve, 1931/1971

The Essential Herbal magazine – <http://www.essentialherbal.com/>

The Heirloom Gardener magazine - <http://www.rareseeds.com/resources/magazine/>

The Herb Quarterly magazine – <http://www.herbquarterly.com/>

## Other on-line resources of interest:

Plants for a Future – information center for edible or otherwise useful plants from around the world – <http://www.pfaf.org/>

Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification System (Wikipedia) - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Köppen\\_climate\\_classification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification)

WeatherBase – travel weather, climate averages, forecasts and current conditions worldwide - <http://www.weatherbase.com>

World Climate Charts – worldwide climate data and charts, day length - <http://www.climate-charts.com>

NRCS Web Soil Survey – soil data, maps and information - <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov>

Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Districts - <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/9093/Default.aspx>

Ohio NRCS site - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/oh/home/>

