**California- Friendly Herb Gardens**

1. Herbs:
   1. Applies to any plant that is used for seasoning, medicine, or fragrance
   2. Mostly water efficient and promotes ecological diversity
   3. Invites pollinators and provides multiple benefits less water use, lower maintenance, and aesthetic beauty
   4. Can be classified into 3 groups: annual, biennial, and perennial
      1. Annuals (ex: basil)
         1. Complete a lifecycle from seed to flowering to reseeding in 1 year, then die; “germinate, grow, flower, set seed, and die in less than a year
            1. Cool-season annuals: can withstand fairly heavy frosts, develop their roots and foliage in fall and early spring
            2. Warm-season annuals: cannot withstand cold temperatures
            3. Best to be planted during the spring
      2. Perennials (ex: mint & thyme)
         1. Goes through repeated annual flowering and seed producing cycle before it dies; lives more than 2 years
         2. Best to be planted during the spring
      3. Biennials (ex: sage)
         1. Require 2 years or two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. Flower the 2nd year. Typically require a dormant period after the 1st year.

1. Planting:
   1. Group herbs depending on their light requirements
      1. full sun or shade
   2. Plant tall herbs in the back and shorter in the front
   3. Prefer soil PH of about 6.0-7.0; well drained and loamy soil

1. Propagation:
   1. Can be propagated from seed, root cuttings, or division of a mother plant
   2. Can be started indoors or outdoors
   3. Transplant after the danger of frost
   4. Irrigation is necessary for herbs to become established, after established can tolerate some drought

1. Harvesting:
   1. Pick leaves whenever plant has enough foliage to maintain growth. Pick early mornings before flowers open when leaves contain highest content of oils. Cut stems 6 inches below flower buds. Herbs can also be dried by hanging in without artificial heat or exposure to sunlight.

5. Herb Basics:

Basil, sage, cilantro/parsley, lavender, lemon balm, oregano, peppermint, rosemary, and thyme

* Basil: plant during the spring in a location that receives full sun. Sow seeds indoors, then transplant outdoors two weeks after the frost. Can be used for soups, stews, salads, sauces, omelets. Medicinal properties: deodorizer, anti-inflammatory, anti-arthritic, insect repellent, antioxidant.
* Sage: sow indoors, then transplant outdoors during the spring. Plant in an area where the plant receives sun, and part shade. Grows slowly, and can be used dry or fresh. Seasoning for meats and herb teas. Effective herbal remedy, can reverse greying of hair, reduce fever, and calm anxiety. Routine trimming will keep attraction year round. Most are highly drought tolerant and will do well with little to no irrigation once established. They are excellent for erosion control on slopes and favorites of hummingbirds, butterflies, and other pollinators.
* Cilantro/Parsley: sow seeds directly outdoors during spring and summer, plant in an area with full sun and light shade. High in antioxidant Vitamin C, as well as several vitamins and minerals. Excellent seasoning for meats and salsas. Aids with digestion and relieves inflammation, along with reducing stress.
* Lavender: sow from seed indoors, then transplant outdoors in early spring. Grow in a dry and full sun location with low humidity and moisture. Plant in well-drained soil and allow for air aeration. Slow growing, reaches full size in 3 years, prune after each blooming season. Can be used in herbal remedies, and in natural oils. Natural deterrent for mosquitoes and garden pests. Can also be used for seasoning and baking.
* Lemon Balm: Sow indoors, then transplant in spring or fall in an area with full sun. Provides several benefits such as scent, reduces inflammation and infections. When ingested, can relieve gas, cramping, and an upset stomach. Natural repellent for mosquitoes and flying pests.
* Oregano: Sow indoors, then transplant during early spring. Plant in an area with full sun and afternoon shade. Leaves and flowers are edible. Excellent seasoning and a natural insect repellent.
* Peppermint: Sow indoors and transplant 2 weeks prior to the first frost. Plant in an area with sun and part shade. As a tea can help clear sinus congestion, soothe headache, help with relaxation, and relieves menstrual cramps. Serves as an excellent deterrent of pests.
* Rosemary: sow in spring, or grow from cuttings. Plant in a location with full sun. Requires good drainage, pruning encourages growth. Can be used for seasoning in meats and vegetables. Scent helps relieve stress, clear the mind and quiet anxiety. Minimal water requirements, once established.
* Thyme: Sow in seed indoors, then transplant early spring. Good source of antioxidant vitamin A, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and antibiotic. Thyme-infused tea can be used as a remedy against colds, coughs, and sore throats. Can be used to flavor soups and sauces. Attracts pollinators, such as bees.