

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing basil

Herbs not only enhance food's taste but can also have many nutritional benefits, with basil being a good example. Basil is often incorporated into Italian dishes and is one of the main ingredient in pesto, but in addition to its delicious taste, basil is an anti-inflammatory, rich in magnesium and has antibacterial characteristics. Herbs grow quickly and are easy to grow in pots on a porch if there is limited garden space. Basil comes in many different options with flavors from sweet to spicy.

### To plant:

Basil grows best in warm weather, and basil seeds should be planted after all dangers of frost have passed. Plant seeds 1/4 inch deep and 12 inches apart. Seeds can be started indoors to get a head start on growing the herb. Plant indoors six weeks before the last frost date and place in a sunny windowsill. Plant in moist soil that is well-drained. If planting in a container, use a larger pot to prevent plants from drying out in the summer heat.

### To grow:

Basil needs six to eight hours of sun per day. Water the plants freely during dry periods and once flowering begins, pinch off the flower heads to encourage the leaves to continue to grow. Basil does best in soil with a pH of 6 to 7. Since basil likes moisture, place mulch in the pot or around the plants to help retain moisture. Basil should be pruned once the plant has six to eight leaves. After the basil plant is six weeks old, pinch off the center shoot to keep flowering at bay.



[Genovese Basil seeds](#)  
[available at ufseeds.com](#)

Basil grows well if planted near tomatoes in the garden.

The biggest threat to a basil plant is root rot from poor drainage, so ensure the planting site has adequate drainage. Also, watch out for pests such as aphids, slugs or Japanese beetles.

### To harvest:

Basil leaves can begin to be harvested once the plant is 6 to 8 inches tall, typically 60 to 90 days after planting the seeds. Picking leaves regularly encourages more growth. Harvest the leaves by pinching them off of the stem, and always harvest from the top of the plant. Basil can be frozen to preserve its flavor, used fresh or dried.

### What basil craves:

Since basil is a very fast-growing and leafy plant, it requires fertilizer. Upon planting, add organic nutrients to the soil such as compost, blood meal or cottonseed meal.



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Feed with liquid plant food every few weeks to encourage growth, but be sure to not use fertilizers that leave a harmful residue since you will be consuming the leaves.

## Where to buy basil seeds:

Urban Farmer sells many kinds of basil ranging from the traditional green sweet basil to basil with ruffled leaves, purple basil and lemon or cinnamon basil. Check out basil seeds on our website at [ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)!



Dark Opal Basil seeds  
available at [ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)



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