

Flowering herbs are an absolute favourite of many bumblebee species!

They are also one of the easiest things you can grow, add tonnes of flavour to your plate, and are great for containers and small spaces. Overall, they definitely get our vote as 'must have' plants!

Feeding bumblebees

Many herbs have leaves you can pick regularly throughout the year, so don't forget to leave some stems alone to produce flowers for bumblebees. Some herbs also have edible flowers, so pick a few for you (if you like) **and leave the rest for your buzzing visitors!**

Quick guide to buying and planting

Buy as potted plants – this is much easier than growing from seed and won't cost much.

Value for money – the herbs in this guide are all perennials (or have perennial varieties), which means they should survive winter and grow again each spring.

Soil condition – herbs tend to prefer free-draining soil. If you have heavy soil, try adding some grit to the hole before planting. If you're planting in containers, make sure they have holes in the base. Always try to use

peat-free compost as this is best for the environment.

Planting times – herbs can be planted throughout the year as long as the ground isn't too cold or waterlogged, but spring and autumn are generally the best times.

Always try to choose organic, pesticide-free plants – these are best for bumblebees. Ask for advice at your local garden centre or nursery, or search online for mail-order seed and plant companies.

Where to plant Sunny/shady? You can eat the...

Top tips!

Key for icons used in the guide



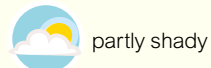
container or ground



container



sunny



partly shady

English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)



Flowers

English lavender is a 'culinary' lavender so can be used **for cooking and baking** – try adding a little to biscuits or shortbread. Bring cut flowers inside or sew dried flower heads into little fabric bags to make your home smell lovely!

If planting in a pot, choose a terracotta one.

Mint (*Mentha species*)


















Leaves

Mint can spread vigorously

After your plant has finished flowering in late summer, cut back to just above soil level and feed with an organic high-nitrogen fertiliser. This will help encourage a fresh growth of leaves in autumn. Unlike many herbs, mint prefers richer, moister soil.

Use the leaves to make your own **fresh mint tea** – just add hot water!



	Where to plant	Sunny/shady?	You can eat the...	Top tips!
Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) 			Leaves	<p>Young rosemary plants don't like waterlogged soil in winter, so grow in a pot for a few years before planting into the ground (if you like).</p> <p>Rosemary is evergreen and very versatile as a herb, so use its leaves to flavour a wide variety of dishes all year round.</p>
Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>) 			Leaves and flowers Note: the stems of flowering shoots tend to be too tough to eat.	<p>Chives in pots need to be lifted out and divided at the roots every few years to stop them getting too 'crowded'. Replant separately to get more chive plants for free, or give to friends.</p> <p>Chives make a tasty addition to salads, soups, sauces, and potato or egg dishes. Try using the pretty flowers as an edible garnish!</p>
Thyme (<i>Thymus species</i>) 			Leaves	<p>Thyme loves dry soil so doesn't need watering once it's been planted for a few weeks. Trimming thyme back after it's finished flowering will help promote new growth and stop it becoming 'woody' over time.</p> <p>Try adding to stews, marinades, or roasted vegetables.</p>
Oregano/wild marjoram (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>) 			Leaves	<p>Dried oregano leaves have a stronger flavour than fresh leaves. Dry them by harvesting bunches, tying them together, and then hanging upside down inside a paper bag (to catch the dried leaves).</p> <p>Delicious sprinkled over pizzas or into tomato sauces!</p>
Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>) 			Leaves	<p>Sage can get a bit woody after a couple of years, so prune it back hard in the early autumn to promote fresh growth the following spring.</p> <p>Leaves can generally be picked all year round but fresh leaves in summer have the best flavour for cooking.</p>