

The Undercover Gardener's Tiny But Essential Guide to Growing Basil

Basil is one of the most popular herbs in the world, and for good reason. It's easy to grow, it's delicious, and it's packed with nutrients. But if you're a novice gardener, growing basil can be a bit intimidating. That's where The Undercover Gardener's Tiny But Essential Guide to Growing Basil comes in. This handy little guide will teach you everything you need to know to grow beautiful, healthy basil plants, even if you're a complete beginner.



The Undercover Gardener's Tiny (But Essential) Guide To Growing Basil by Brian Mounts

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 27 pages
Lending : Enabled



Choosing the Right Basil Variety

There are many different varieties of basil available, so it's important to choose one that's right for your needs. If you're not sure which variety to choose, ask your local nursery for recommendations. Some of the most popular basil varieties include:

- **Sweet basil:** This is the most common type of basil, and it's known for its sweet, slightly anise-flavored leaves.
- **Lemon basil:** This variety has a strong lemon flavor, and it's often used in Thai and Vietnamese dishes.
- **Thai basil:** This variety has a spicy, peppery flavor, and it's often used in Southeast Asian dishes.
- **Cinnamon basil:** This variety has a sweet, cinnamon-like flavor, and it's often used in desserts.

How to Plant Basil

Basil can be planted from seed or from transplants. If you're starting from seed, sow the seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before the last frost. Transplant the seedlings outdoors when they are 2-3 inches tall and the weather is warm. If you're planting transplants, space them 12-18 inches apart.

Basil prefers well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter. Choose a sunny location for your basil plants, as they need at least 6 hours of sunlight per day.

How to Care for Basil

Basil is a relatively low-maintenance plant, but there are a few things you can do to keep your plants healthy and productive.

- **Water regularly:** Basil needs about 1 inch of water per week. Water more frequently during hot, dry weather.
- **Fertilize monthly:** Basil benefits from a monthly application of a balanced fertilizer.

- **Pinch back the tips of the stems:** This will encourage your basil plants to grow bushier.
- **Mulch around your plants:** Mulch will help to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

How to Harvest Basil

Basil can be harvested throughout the growing season. Simply snip off the leaves as you need them. If you're harvesting a large amount of basil, you can cut the entire plant back to about 6 inches tall. This will encourage the plant to produce new growth.

How to Store Basil

Fresh basil can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week. Wrap the basil loosely in a damp paper towel and place it in a plastic bag. You can also freeze basil for up to 6 months. To freeze basil, wash and dry the leaves, then place them in a freezer bag. Freeze the basil flat so that it's easy to break off pieces as needed.

Basil Recipes

Basil is a versatile herb that can be used in a variety of dishes. Here are a few of our favorite basil recipes:

- **Pesto:** Pesto is a classic Italian sauce made with basil, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil. It's delicious on pasta, pizza, or grilled chicken.
- **Caprese salad:** Caprese salad is a simple but delicious salad made with tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, and basil. It's a great way to enjoy the flavors of summer.

- **Thai basil chicken:** This dish is made with chicken, Thai basil, and a spicy sauce. It's a quick and easy weeknight meal.
- **Basil lemonade:** Basil lemonade is a refreshing and flavorful summer drink. It's made with basil, lemon juice, and sugar.

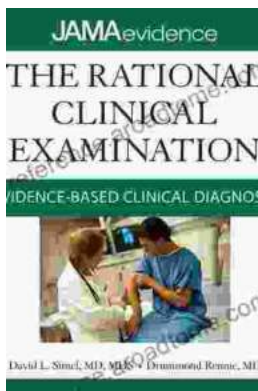
Growing basil is a great way to add fresh flavor to your dishes. With just a little care, you can grow beautiful, healthy basil plants all season long. So what are you waiting for? Get started today!



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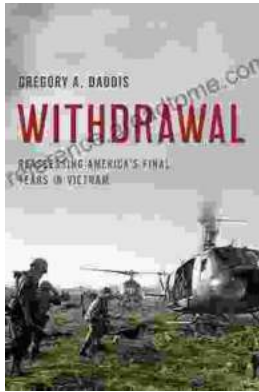
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