

# TIPS FOR DRYING HERBS

## 1. TRIMMING

Regular monthly trimming of the top-third of each branch of herbs will prevent or delay the flowering (formation of seed heads) and drying out and promote new branches for more harvesting. Most herbs have the best flavor just before the flowers appear, as flowering pulls essential oils (flavor) from the leaves.

## 2. CLEANING

Rinse herbs very well with water, ensuring that all dirt and/or bugs are removed. Two or three washings may be necessary for plants grown outdoors.

## 3. INITIAL DRYING

Pat the herbs dry, roll in clean, dry towels or use a salad spinner before continuing the drying process.

## 4. CAUTIONS

If you notice leaves getting brown, black, yellow or showing signs of mold or have an odd smell, discard the herbs and try again. Be alert to leaves sticking together after washing as that leads to slow drying and possible mold.

## 5. DRYING MEDIUM-TO-LARGE-LEAFED HERBS

Herbs like basil, bay, marjoram and oregano: Lightly spread whole leaves (or stems with leaves) over a screen, on a cloth or on paper towels and place in a warm, dark, airy location. Let stand until all moisture has evaporated, fluffing periodically to ensure leaves are not stuck together. Remove whole, dried leaves from stems and place in an airtight container (leave whole until ready to use).

## 6. DRYING WOODY-STEMMED HERBS

Herbs like lavender, mint, sage, thyme and rosemary: Gather bundles of herbs by their stems and tie, rubber band or wrap by the base. Hang upside down in a warm, dark location until all the moisture has evaporated. Herbs can also be hung in large, paper grocery bags with air holes or slits to allow for airflow while protecting from dust. When dry, remove leaves from stems and place in an airtight container. This is also the best way to dry and harvest seeds, such as coriander and fennel.

