

KINGMAN IS GROWING! COLUMN

Growing Herbs in Your Landscape, A Good Use of **Water**

By **Lynda Goldberg** and **Robin Kingery**, Kingman Area Associate Master Gardeners

OMG—(Oh Master Gardener!) The water bill has arrived and again my husband looks at me and says, “YOUR garden is getting more and more expensive!” I try to justify the cost of watering by reasoning that our garden provides many rewards. It invites wildlife; it provides shade reducing our cooling bill; and it offers beautiful places to relax, reflect, and meditate.

“Well...” he says, “Meditate on this!” presenting me the bill.

I just smile because I have an ace in the hole: All the organic nutritious food in my garden is providing for both of US now living in the desert!

In the high desert, a host of problems can exist for a gardener from the Midwest (via California). In those areas of our country, it was reasonably easy to grow just about any edible, but the desert requires a good deal of know-how, patience, and endurance. Knowing where and when to **design** and **plant** a garden requires **planning** and **research**. The outcome from all of this challenging preparation **can** bring a bounty of reward and enjoyment making it well worth the challenge. In doing so, why not plan your landscaping to serve **multiple purposes to make the best use of our water resources?**

Design consideration

Planting consideration

<p><u>Raised beds</u> (amended ground level varies, recommend depth 1.5-2 feet) designs made accessible by winding paths of flagstone meandering between fruit trees placed in strategic positions for shade, ease of harvesting and maintenance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Water Usages?</u></p> <p>Depending on your water system i.e., drippers, bubblers, soakers, or various emitters—it would be necessary to research what each plant requires and soil conditions.</p>
<p><u>Trellises</u> (well-placed) provide overhead shade while beautifying your environment. Additionally, fruits such as grapes can grow abundantly in the desert.</p>	
<p><u>Private seating areas</u> separated by roses, herbs, dwarf fruit trees, containers or raspberry bushes.</p>	
<p><u>Ground covers</u> can be used as flowerbed edgings. You can even use them for your lawn!</p>	
<p><u>Containers and window boxes</u> placed in areas on porches and/or patios can add extra attraction for your senses' interest. Flowers and edible herbs make good fragrance teasers as you walk by and brush against them, releasing the scents of your favorite bouquets or food recipes.</p>	<p>The “finger-poke” method may be most logical. Containers tend to dry-out quickly in the desert; it’s best to check them daily. If dry, water accordingly. Can also be set up for manual controlled drip system.</p>

You can be creative with your landscape design using, fruit, berries, vegetables, vines and herbs. A well-planned garden can **save on water**; provide shade, beauty, nature and edibles that feed us too! Now I smile confidently as my husband devours a salad, eating fresh vegetables and enjoying sweet fruits and herbs from **our** garden... He’s sold. Now it’s ‘HIS’ garden too!

The following chart represents some of our favorite **herbs** also used for landscaping—Enjoy!

<p>Basil - (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) – Annual</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Plant in late spring after threat of frost.</i></p> <p>Grows well in containers, beds and even in the kitchen window. Early sun dweller. Protect from wind and hot afternoon shade. Water when dry. Sweet or spicy - Basil’s varieties include cinnamon; lemon (O.b. “Citriodorum”); bush Greek (O. b. “minimum”); Thai; purple ruffled (O. b. “Purpurascens”)... just to mention a few. All bloom light purple, pink or white. Pick young leaves from the top to encourage new growth. Can be grown from seeds; let flowers seed out, dry and collect for next year. Use in salads, soups, sauces, Asian dishes, pizza, pasta and anywhere you’d like. Basil has a wonderful aroma and taste! Eat leaves and flowers, fresh or dried.</p>	
<p>Chamomile (<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i> [<i>Anthemis nobilis</i>]) – Perennial / Annual</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Plant seeds in late spring.</i></p> <p>Grows great in containers, or as bedding plants; additionally, it can be used as a lawn (M. recitota pr A. tinctoria), ground cover or between pavers. Works best in the desert as it grows well in full sun and dry soil. Easy to start from seed Roman Chamomile (<i>Matricaria recutita</i>). There is a double flower (C. n. var. Flore-pleno) that is a very attractive selection. A good companion plant to keep away flying insects. Use as a rinse for fair hair to brighten—infuse Chamomile with boiling water, let steep until cool and strain for tea. Tea helps gastric problems, calms the nerves; or use steeped in olive oil for skin problems. Keep chamomile productive by trimming flowers.</p>	

Calendula - (Calendula officinalis) – Annual

Plant seeds in early summer.

Grow in window boxes, hanging baskets or in beds. **Loves hot dry conditions. Will not tolerate too much water.** Use as a substitute for expensive Saffron. Young leaves can be added to salad but tends to be slightly bitter. Steep flower petals for tea or in olive oil for skin issues. Deadhead to keep flowers blooming. Will self-seed. Good for use on burns and stings.



Lavender (Lavendula from the family Labiatae) – Perennial

Plant in early spring or late fall.

Can be planted as evergreen shrubs, hedges, in flowerbeds, borders and containers. **Well-drained soil. Will not tolerate very wet soil.** Tender in some varieties, from the Mediterranean, Canary Islands and India. Lavender will grow in warm, airy and sunny areas but can adapt to some shade. There is so much to be said about it—a number of books have been written about Lavender. Some varieties are (Lavandua angustifolia ‘Alba’), (L. angustifolia ‘Rosa’), (L. stoechas [French Lavender]), and (Lavandula angustifolia ‘Hidcote’). Its healing properties are nearly endless, but it tastes good too! Use dried flowers to make tea or add to baking recipes. Use fresh or dried; add to sugar, honey, butter, and cold-pressed oils for flavoring. Its scent is relaxing and helps bring sleep—place a fresh bouquet at your bedside. I know of 21 varieties offering gray, green or gray-green foliage. Blooms can range from light to rich purples, blues, mauves, white and pinks. **Make sure to plant where you brush against it often to inhale its amazing aroma!** In Autumn, before frost, trim back flowers and young growth (but not old wood) after blooming for shaping.



Oregano (Origanum species) – Perennial

Plant in late spring.

Can be grown as a ground cover or in containers. **Soils should be dry-ish and well drained, alkaline but nutrient rich.** A Mediterranean native, also heat and full sun tolerant. Used in many pasta dishes and in pizza. Leaves and flowers can be white to light purplish. Eat fresh or dried.



Parsley (Petroselinum crispum) – Bi-annual

Plant seeds in early spring or plant starts after the threat of frost.

Best in container for water usage. Tolerates alkaline soils, which tend to be more prevalent in the desert but **favors some shade and cooler temperatures.** This beautiful curled leafed parsley can be used for presentation or in dishes. It's known for bringing out the flavors of any dish and freshening breath. Fresh is best, but can be dried and added to dishes.



<p>Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis) – Perennial</p> <p><i>Plant after threat of frost.</i></p> <p>Can be used in containers (both upright and hanging), in hedges and ground cover. <i>Great for fireplace aroma!</i> Grows well in the desert. Very attractive varieties include golden (green leaves with a splash of gold) and blue; prostrate and several types of shrubs; plants have white, blue or pink flowers. Also use in meat, soup, sauce, pasta dishes, pizza, rolls and breads. Eat both leaves and blooms. Great fresh or dried.</p>	
<p>Sage (salvia officinalis) – Perennial / Annual / Bi-annual</p> <p><i>Plant after threat of frost.</i></p> <p>Grows well in the ground or in containers. Native to the Mediterranean, it handles high temp and alkaline soils well. Variety of colors from green to grayish green, tri-color, yellow. Has a pineapple scent. Light purple flowers invite bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Use it to flavor pork, poultry, fish and other meats. Leaves and blossoms are great fresh or dried.</p>	
<p>Tarragon (Artesia dracunculus) – (tender) Perennial</p> <p><i>Plant after threat of frost.</i></p> <p>Best suited to a container or as a ground cover. Produces runners. Quite drought tolerant, it does very well in the desert, in sun or shade. It has a unique taste and is considered the Rolls Royce of culinary herbs. It complements many dishes, i.e., chicken, stuffed tomatoes, rice, salads and pasta. Eat the leaves, fresh or dried.</p>	
<p>Thyme (Thymus species) – Perennial</p> <p><i>Plant after threat of frost.</i></p> <p>All varieties can be planted in containers and beds. Another heat and drought tolerant herb; grows well in full sun, well-drained alkaline soil. An overall seasoning for just about any dish, i.e., meats, soups, sauces and pastas. Thyme's flavor is usually mild. Selection varieties: orange-scented; silver; golden creeping thyme (Thymus "Aireis"); the "Silver Lemon Queen," (T. x citriodorus), a shrub variety 12", has pale pink flowers. Both Silver Lemon and common thyme are flavorful. Great to plant between pavers (thymus caespititius) and can stand foot traffic. Colors range from pink, light blue and white. Leaves and flowers are edible.</p>	

The list for edibles as practical gardening options goes on and on. Edible flowers and herbs, vegetables, fruit trees, vines and shrubs can complete your garden, offering both beauty and [wise water](#) usage options. If you've ever believed that gardening may not be worth the [water...](#) well... we hope we've changed your mind. It is worth the [water!](#)

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For more information contact The University of Arizona Mohave County Cooperative Extension, 101 E. Beale Street, Kingman or telephone (928) 753-3788.

The Kingman Area Master Gardeners are presenting a “Spring Gardening” workshop on Saturday, March 7, 2009 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, at 101 E. Beale Street, Kingman. They will cover waterwise gardening, composting and soil preparation, moving the inside plants out, growing flowers and vegetables and fruit trees and grapes in the desert. The workshop is free and open to the public, but seating is limited so call for your reservation, 753-3788.

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