



ALMANAC

Thursday, May 1, 2025



ORDER YOUR ALMANAC TODAY!

HOME > GARDENING > GROWING GUIDES

How to Grow Thyme Plants: The Complete Guide



Learn how to plant, grow, and harvest thyme in your herb garden.

Botanical Name:	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>
Plant Type:	Herb
Season:	Full Sun,

FREE GUIDE!



sur
e:

Ha [5](#), [6](#), [7](#),
rdi- [8](#), [9](#)
ne
ss
Zo
ne:

Planting, Growing, and Harvesting Thyme

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)
Last Updated: April 24, 2025



Sign up for daily gardening advice and tips

Enter your email address

SIGN UP

ADVERTISEMENT

It’s about time to grow some thyme!

Thyme is a wonderful herb with a pleasant, pungent, clover flavor. There are both fragrant ornamental types as well as culinary thyme varieties, which add a savory note to summer soups, grilled meats, and vegetables. Here’s how to plant and

About Thyme

A low-growing, hardy perennial, thyme is a fragrant herb with small, fragrant leaves and thin, woody stems. The culinary varieties are evergreen.

Thyme comes in over 50 varieties with different fragrances and flavors. Fresh or English thyme is used most often in cooking.

BUY SEEDS NOW

ADVERTISEMENT

have high watering needs. It is also pollinator-friendly! Let some thyme plants flower since the herb attracts the bees.

While thyme is usually harvested in the summer months, we have harvested ours well into late fall!

Thyme can grow in the ground or in a container. Either is left outside in winter-time. New leaves will emerge within the early spring.

!Thyme Management in the Garden



ADVERTISEMENT

Read Next

- [How to Grow Rosemary Plants: The Complete Guide](#)
- [Indoor Herb Garden: How to Get Started!](#)
- [How to Grow Oregano Plants: The Complete Guide](#)

PLANTING

- Thyme thrives in full sun and loves heat. If you are growing in a pot indoors, plant near a sunny window.
- Soil needs to drain well so there aren't "wet feet." In the garden, plant with other drought-tolerant perennials.
- In early spring, you may fertilize with organic matter, like compost, but not much soil amendment is necessary.
- It's hard to grow thyme from seeds because of slow, uneven germination. It's easier to buy the plants from a garden

friend. Over time, you can propagate from your own cuttings.

- For a head start, plant the cuttings indoors 6 to 10 weeks before the last spring frost. ([See your local frost dates.](#))
- Plant cuttings or young thyme plants any time after the [ground temperature](#) reaches 70°F. This is usually 2 to 3 weeks before the last spring frost in well-drained soil about 9 inches apart.
- Space young plants 12 to 24 inches apart, depending upon the specific variety.
- The plants should grow 6 to 12 inches in height.
- In the garden, plant thyme near [cabbage](#) or [tomatoes](#).
- If you are growing thyme in containers, plant with rosemary, which also likes sunny conditions and has similar watering needs.

GROWING

- Water deeply only when the soil is

- If you have cold winters, remember to lightly mulch around the plants after the ground freezes.
- Three to 4-year-old plants need to be divided or replaced because older plants are woody and the leaves less flavorful.
- You can take some cuttings and plant them indoors in pots, too.

How to Take a Cutting of Thyme

Clip a 3-inch cutting from the very tip of a stem, apply rooting hormone on the exposed portion of the stem, and plant it in either sterile sand or vermiculite. Roots will emerge within about 6 weeks.

Transfer to a small pot, let the root ball form, and then transfer to a large pot or directly to your garden.



Types

The three most common varieties of culinary thyme are:

- **French or English thyme**
(most common)
- **Lemon thyme**, for a hint of lemon
- **Caraway thyme**, for a nice fragrance of caraway and thyme

HARVESTING

- Harvest thyme just before the plant flowers by cutting off the top 5 to 6 inches of growth. Leave the tough, woody parts.
- It's best to harvest thyme in the morning after the dew has dried. Clean leaves should not be washed because it removes some of the essential oils.
- Two or more crops may be gathered during the season.
- Or, if you keep trimming your thyme plant, it will keep growing (and also keep a compact shape). But always

- Trim thyme whenever it gets leggy.
- Fresh thyme should be stored refrigerated and wrapped lightly in plastic; it should last 1 to 2 weeks.
- To dry thyme, hang the sprigs in a dark, well-ventilated, warm area. You can also just dry the leaves by placing them on a tray. Once dried, store them in an airtight container. Crush just before using. Under good conditions, herbs will retain maximum flavor for 2 years.
- Freezing is another method of storage.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



- [Gray mold](#)
- Root rot

WIT AND WISDOM

Burning thyme can help get rid of insects in your house.

[Learn more about herb folklore.](#)

RECIPES

HERB-STUFFED PASTA

**GRILLED FLANK STEAK WITH
THYME**

**CARROTS WITH BROWN BUTTER
& THYME**

**CHICKEN WITH LEMON AND
THYME**

COOKING NOTES

meats, soups, beans, and potatoes.

Its taste has been described as a bit earthy with lemony and minty tones. Some think it has a slight floral flavor.

Fresh thyme can be used with or without its stem. However, if a recipe calls for a “sprig,” the stem should be left on. The leaves will fall off in cooking, and then the stem can be removed prior to serving.

If a recipe calls for a “sprig” of thyme, the leaves and stem should be used together, intact. When adding a whole sprig of thyme to soups, stews, or other recipes, the leaves usually fall off during cooking, and the woody stem can be removed prior to serving.

HERBS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

MORE LIKE THIS



How to Grow Rosemary Plants: The Complete Guide



Indoor Herb Garden: How to Get Started!



How to Grow Oregano Plants: The Complete Guide



How to Grow a Tea Garden (And 10 Herbs to Plant)



10 Ground Cover Plants for Your Garden



A How-to Guide: Companion Planting with Herbs

ADVERTISEMENT

COMMENTS

[ADD A COMMENT](#)

Thyme Potter Newbie (not verified) 2 years

2 months ago

Hello almanac.com:

ADVERTISEMENT

Living in Pennsylvania where temperatures are currently in the 20-30 degree range, I've come by a thyme plant with a long, woody, root tht runs horizontal to the plant. This root has multiple fine filaments where it meets the up-right portion of the plant and further down has

herb for indoors, i.e. until spring arrives, and have the following questions:

1. What particular potting soil mix would best serve this purpose?
2. And/or would some dirt dug up from the back yard be just as good?
3. If the main root was trimmed for potting, leaving just the fine tendrils section ... could other pieces of this main root, i.e. those with the single extensions, be potted to produce other, separate, plants?

-Thanks for any inputs.

REPLY

Eleanor (not verified) 5 years 11 months ago

I started my thyme seeds in April inside the house under LED lights 16 hrs on 8 hrs off. Sprouted in about 2 weeks now it does not appear to be growing at all. Some days it looks dry and other days it appears to be over watered.

Sara (not verified) 5 years 12 months ago

I just put my thyme outside,with temp.17-19 in the day and 5-7 at night.have had a bit of rain,I notice the green has faded,what can I do to get the leaves green again.right now I took it away from the rain.please tell me how to take care of this plant.thanks.

REPLY

Nathaniel (not verified) 6 years 3 months ago

Please how can I get this plant around Oyo state.

REPLY

lucia calero (not verified) 6 years 11 months ago

i have a large bed full of thyme and it is flowering at the tips. can the flowers and seeds be eaten?

REPLY

The Editors 6 years 11 months ago

Yes, you can eat the thyme flowers: they are not only pretty but perfectly edible. If you want to avoid flowering, however, be sure to trim your herbs. Thyme will regrow if you trim only the very top inch of each branch. (Do not cut into old wood.) The plant may look a bit sparse, but it will sprout again as long as you don't overwater it.

REPLY

jeanne (not verified) 7 years 9 months ago

Purple flowers have taken over my bed of Thyme. Do I use them in my cooking?

REPLY

The Editors 7 years 9 months ago

Hi Jeanne,

oil, or in salads.

REPLY

shirly sukhram (not verified) 7 years 9 months ago

I have German and English thyme in containers and noticed the leaves are very tiny and stringy stems. I usually cut them and dried for use in the winter. My ? is do I need to fertilize them. Thank you.

REPLY

The Editors 7 years 9 months ago

Is the thyme healthy looking, otherwise? We usually like to start with a specimen that is stringy-looking to tie onto a frame. However, once you give the thyme plenty of bright light (6 to 8 hours) and fertilizer and water, the stems should start to get woody and stuff and self-supporting. Is the light bright enough? Is the soil mois-

Herbs require minimal fertilization. In fact, herbs often suffer from overwatering and overfertilizing rather than from not enough. We like to amend with peat moss or any type of composted organic matter at planting but avoid fertilization after germination.

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

THE OLD FARMER'S STORE



The Old Farmer's Almanac W...

\$21.97

BUY NOW



The Old Farmer's Almanac He...

\$16.99

BUY NOW



Ben's Pure Maple Cream

\$13.95

BUY NOW



Rain Gauge Stake - Heron

\$45.99

BUY NOW

ADVERTISEMENT

Our Brands

- [The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids](#)
- [Yankee Magazine](#)
- [Family Tree Magazine](#)
- [NH Business Review](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)

Resources

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Free Daily Newsletter](#)
- [Webcam](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Media Relations](#)

Connect with Us

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookie List](#)

[Do Not Sell or Share](#)

[My Personal](#)

[Information](#)

©2025 [Yankee Publishing Inc.](#), An Employee-Owned Company

1121 Main Street | P.O. Box 520 | Dublin, NH 03444