

Make mine a mojito, how to grow your own cocktail

To make you *sidestep* a gin and tonic or a cold beer, a cocktail has to be special, and it is this small collection of herbs that makes all the difference.

sidestep 回避

A cocktail, like a salad dressing, needs a balance of fruitiness, *aromatics*, sweetness, sharpness, sourness and something to lengthen and dilute the intensity. A few well-chosen herbs can add all these, and you don't need much space in which to grow them. You can even squeeze a few herbs into a single large pot, the bigger, the better. With care, they'll last for years.

aromatics 芳香; 香料

sourness 酸味

Capturing a herb's qualities for your cocktail can be as simple as adding a few leaves, perhaps part-crushing them, or creating an infusion to add to the mix.

The quickest route to herby cocktail happiness is making a *syrup*, which will add *aroma*, flavour and sweetness to the whole.

syrup 糖浆; 果汁

aroma 芳香

Dissolve 200g sugar in 200ml water in a pan over a moderate heat, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat as the syrup reaches a *simmer*; add a small handful of herb leaves and allow to infuse as the syrup cools. When it becomes tepid, lift the leaves out with a slotted spoon. The result should be bright and aromatic.

simmer 即将沸腾; 酝酿; 即将爆发

tepid 温热的

This simple process works equally well with most perennial herbs. Don't forget, if you have fruit to hand (grown or foraged), or even vegetables, there is usually a cocktail to suit.