



## **Cancer Support Herbal Garden Project**

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### *Purpose*

This herbal garden is designed to support cancer warriors through: - Herbal remedies (teas, tinctures, balms) - Emotional healing through gardening therapy - Natural wellness and immune support

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# MASTER HERB LIST – FULL EXPANDED GUIDE

Each herb below includes a therapeutic profile, usage instructions, growing tips, and **cautions** to ensure safe use.

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## 1. Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)

### Benefits:

- Anti-inflammatory and antioxidant-rich
- Supports liver function and detox pathways
- May inhibit cancer cell growth
- Enhances overall immune response

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Golden Milk:** Simmer 1 tsp turmeric with milk, black pepper, cinnamon, and a healthy fat (like coconut oil).
- **Paste or poultice:** Apply to inflamed joints or skin issues.
- **Capsules or tinctures:** For consistent internal dosage.

### Growing Instructions:

- Plant rhizomes horizontally in rich, well-drained soil.
- Needs warmth and humidity; ideal in subtropical regions.
- Harvest after 8 - 10 months when leaves yellow and die back.
- Cure harvested roots for 1 week in the shade before storage.

### Caution:

- Can thin blood - avoid high doses if on anticoagulants.
- May cause stomach upset in sensitive individuals.



## 2. Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

### Benefits:

- Excellent for nausea relief, especially chemotherapy-related
- Anti-inflammatory and circulatory stimulant
- Aids digestion and absorption of nutrients

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Fresh Tea:** Slice fresh root into hot water with lemon and honey.
- **Chew fresh ginger:** For nausea control.
- **Infused oil or compress:** Applied to sore joints or muscles.

### Growing Instructions:

- Prefers filtered sunlight and moist, fertile soil.
- Mulch to retain moisture; avoid over-watering.
- Harvest after 8–10 months or when stalks begin to dry.
- Ideal for pots in cooler areas.

### Caution:

- May interfere with blood pressure and diabetes medications.
- Large doses can cause heartburn or bleeding.



### 3. Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*)

#### **Benefits:**

- Calming and relaxing; reduces anxiety and nervous tension
- Supports digestion and restful sleep
- Mild antiviral, especially for herpes virus (cold sores)

#### **Therapeutic Uses:**

- **Tea:** Fresh or dried leaves steeped for 5 - 10 minutes.
- **Tincture or glycerite:** For mood support.
- **Infused oil:** For calming massage blends.

#### **Growing Instructions:**

- Partial shade to full sun; moist, rich soil.
- Grows vigorously - cut back regularly to encourage new growth.
- Easily propagated by cuttings or division.

#### **Caution:**

- May interfere with thyroid medication (inhibits thyroid function).
- Monitor for drowsiness when combined with sedatives.



#### 4. Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla* / *Chamaemelum nobile*)

##### Benefits:

- Soothes the nervous system and promotes restful sleep
- Relieves digestive issues, bloating, and gas
- Anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic

##### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Sleep Tea:** Use 1 - 2 tsp dried flowers with honey.
- **Steam Facial:** For inflamed skin or sinus relief.
- **Infused Oil or Creams:** Soothes eczema and rashes.

##### Growing Instructions:

- Prefers full sun and sandy, well-drained soil.
- Harvest flowers as they open; dry quickly.
- Self-seeds readily - replant each spring or allow reseeding.

##### Caution:

- May trigger allergic reactions in those allergic to ragweed.
- Use caution in pregnancy -consult practitioner.



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## 5. Holy Basil / Tulsi (Ocimum sanctum)

### Benefits:

- Powerful adaptogen; reduces stress and fatigue
- Immune booster, anti-inflammatory, balances blood sugar
- Uplifts mood and promotes clarity

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Daily Tea:** Supports adrenal health and immune function.
- **Tincture:** For long-term stress support.
- **Infused Honey or Syrup:** Delicious respiratory remedy.

### Growing Instructions:

Needs warm climate and full sun.

Pinch off flower buds to extend leaf harvest.

Water regularly; fertilize lightly.

### Caution:

- May reduce fertility; avoid during conception efforts.
- Possible interactions with blood sugar medications.



## 6. Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)

### Benefits:

- Powerful skin healer for wounds, burns, and rashes
- Mild antimicrobial and anti-fungal
- Supports lymphatic detox

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Healing Salve:** Infuse dried petals in oil, blend with beeswax.
- **Lymph Tea:** Dried petals + red clover and cleavers.
- **Bath Soaks:** Soothing for irritated skin.

### Growing Instructions:

- Full sun; tolerates poor soil.
- Deadhead to prolong bloom.
- Harvest flowers regularly and dry on screens.

### Caution:

- May cause allergic skin reactions.
- Use caution internally during pregnancy.



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## 7. Mint (*Mentha* spp.)

### Benefits:

- Soothes nausea and indigestion
- Energizing yet calming
- Freshens breath and uplifts mood

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Peppermint Tea:** Post-meal digestive aid.
- **Cooling Compress:** Fresh leaves steeped and applied to forehead.
- **Steam Inhalation:** For sinus relief.

### Growing Instructions:

- Moist, partially shaded areas are ideal.
- Very invasive - use containers.
- Cut regularly to promote lush growth.

### Caution:

- Avoid high doses during pregnancy.
- Can relax the esophagus - may worsen acid reflux.





## 8. Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*)

### Benefits:

- Liver protector and detoxifier
- High antioxidant levels (silymarin)
- May support chemotherapy recovery

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Seed Powder:** Blend into smoothies or capsules.
- **Tincture:** For liver function support.
- **Tea (roasted seeds):** Earthy and supportive.

### Growing Instructions:

- Full sun; drought-tolerant.
- Spiny leaves - harvest with gloves.
- Let flower heads dry fully for seed collection.

### Caution:

- Can interact with liver medications.
- Use caution if allergic to ragweed or daisies.



## 9. Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*)

### Benefits:

- “Miracle Tree”: High in protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins A & C
- Anti-inflammatory and antioxidant
- Supports detox, energy, and immunity

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Powder:** Added to smoothies, soups, or juices.
- **Fresh Leaves:** Cook like spinach.
- **Tea:** Mild taste; supports clarity and stamina.

### Growing Instructions:

- Needs hot, dry climate.
- Grows quickly; prune often to prevent leggy growth.
- Use deep containers for young trees.

### Caution:

- Avoid root and bark extracts - they can be toxic.
- Leaves are generally safe in moderate food doses.



## 10. Aloe Vera (*Aloe barbadensis*)

### Benefits:

- Soothes burns, rashes, and wounds
- Gentle internal cleanser (use in moderation)
- Moisturizes and restores skin

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Topical Gel:** For burns, sunburn, eczema.
- **Juice:** Digestive aid (only food-grade varieties).
- **Facial Mask Base:** Mix with honey and turmeric.

### Growing Instructions:

- Sandy, well-draining soil.
- Bright, indirect sunlight.
- Water sparingly; allow drying between watering.

### Caution:

- Latex layer (yellow part) is a strong laxative - avoid.
- Not recommended internally during pregnancy.



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## 11. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

### Benefits:

- Cognitive enhancer; improves memory and alertness
- Antioxidant and antimicrobial
- Stimulates circulation and hair growth

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Memory Tea:** Fresh sprigs in hot water.
- **Hair Rinse:** Steeped tea or infused oil.
- **Massage Oil:** Energizing and muscle-soothing.

### Growing Instructions:

- Full sun and sandy soil.
- Allow soil to dry between waterings.
- Prune regularly for shape and airflow.

### Caution:

- High doses may cause seizures.
- Use caution in pregnancy.



## 12. Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)

### Benefits:

- Antibacterial and antiviral
- Supports respiratory and immune health
- Soothes coughs and colds

### Therapeutic Uses:

- **Steam Inhalation:** Clears nasal passages.
- **Tea or Gargle:** Relieves sore throats.
- **Infused Oil:** For chest rubs.

### Growing Instructions:

- Full sun, dry soil.
- Trim regularly to prevent woodiness.
- Great as border plant or in rock gardens.

### Caution:

- Use small doses internally.
- Can irritate mucous membranes in high concentrations.



### 13. Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

#### **Benefits:**

- Full body tonic - supports liver, kidneys, digestion
- Rich in minerals and inulin (a prebiotic fiber)
- Diuretic and mild laxative

#### **Therapeutic Uses:**

- **Leaf Tea:** Gentle diuretic; reduces bloating.
- **Root Decoction:** Roasted or raw, for liver support.
- **Fresh Leaves:** Great in salads with lemon juice.

#### **Growing Instructions:**

- Hardy and drought tolerant.
- Harvest young leaves before flowering.
- Roots can be dug in autumn and dried for storage.

#### **Caution:**

- May interact with diuretics or lithium.
- Those allergic to ragweed may react.



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# GARDENING FOR HEALING & HOPE

## — Cancer Support Herbal Garden: Complete Gardening Section —

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### 1. Garden Planning & Layout

**Purpose:** Balance beauty, access, and function. Healing spaces should feel peaceful.

**Design Tips:**

- Use raised beds for easier access.
- Include paths for walking and wheelchairs.
- Arrange herbs by height and sunlight needs.
- Design themed sections (e.g., "Calm & Sleep", "Detox", "Digestive", "Pain Relief").

**Therapy Tip:** Include seating or benches near fragrant herbs like lavender and rosemary for aromatherapy.

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### 2. Soil Preparation

**Ideal Soil:** Loose, well-draining, rich in organic matter.

**Prep Steps:**

- Remove weeds and loosen the soil to at least 30 cm deep.
- Mix compost and aged manure into the topsoil.
- Add bone meal or kelp meal for mineral support.

**pH Range:** Most herbs prefer pH 6.0–7.5.

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### 3. Composting Basics

**Why Compost?** Boosts soil fertility and moisture retention naturally.

**Compost Ingredients:**

- **Greens:** Veggie scraps, garden trimmings, grass clippings.
- **Browns:** Dry leaves, shredded paper, straw.
- **Optional:** Eggshells, coffee grounds, rooibos tea bags.

**Tips:** Turn compost regularly. Keep moist like a wrung-out sponge.

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### 4. Planting Tips

**Start from:** Seeds or nursery plants. Use seed trays indoors for delicate herbs.

**Spacing:** Depends on the herb; generally 20–40 cm apart.

**Timing:**

- **Spring/Summer Planting:** Basil, Calendula, Lemongrass, Turmeric.
  - **Autumn/Winter Planting:** Garlic, Chamomile, Echinacea, Mint.
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### 5. Watering & Sunlight

- **Sunlight:** Most herbs need 6–8 hours of full sun daily.
  - **Watering:** Deep but infrequent. Water early morning.
  - **Mulching:** Use bark, straw, or dry leaves to retain moisture and control weeds.
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## 6. Natural Pest & Disease Control

**Avoid Chemicals** — especially in therapeutic gardens.

**Safe Solutions:**

- Neem oil spray for aphids and mites.
- Garlic-chili spray for caterpillars and whiteflies.
- Companion planting: Marigolds deter nematodes, Basil protects tomatoes.

**Attract Good Insects:** Bees, ladybugs, praying mantis.

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## 7. Harvesting Herbs

**Best Time:** Early morning after dew dries but before sun is strong.

**Cutting Techniques:**

- Use sharp scissors.
- Don't cut more than 1/3 of the plant at a time.

**Therapy Tip:** Involve patients in harvesting for a mindful, healing activity.

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## 8. Drying & Storage

- **Air Drying:** Tie small bunches and hang upside down in a dry, dark area.
  - **Dehydrator:** Speeds up drying and preserves quality.
  - **Storage:** Keep dried herbs in dark glass jars or brown paper bags. Label and date clearly.
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## 9. Therapy Garden Ideas

- **Aromatherapy Paths:** Include herbs like lavender, lemon balm, mint, and rosemary.
  - **Sensory Beds:** Group herbs by texture, scent, and color.
  - **Prayer Corners:** Add scripture stones or benches for meditation.
  - **Raised Healing Beds:** Waist-high boxes for patients with mobility limits.
  - **Tea Corners:** Place herbs like hibiscus, chamomile, and rooibos near benches with signage explaining health benefits.
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## 10. Container Gardening Option

- **Perfect For:** Small spaces, patios, or homes of recovering patients.
  - **Containers:** At least 30 cm deep with good drainage.
  - **Ideal Herbs for Pots:** Basil, Mint, Parsley, Lemongrass, Aloe Vera, Thyme.
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## 11. Community Garden Tips

- **Assign Bed Sections:** Each member can tend to a group of herbs.
  - **Skill-sharing Days:** Teach composting, harvesting, and herbal tea making.
  - **Children's Beds:** Let kids grow safe herbs like mint, calendula, and lemon balm.
  - **Therapeutic Roles:** Allow patients to choose whether to water, harvest, weed, or just sit and rest.
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## 12. Garden Safety

- **Label Everything Clearly** — especially herbs with cautions.
  - **Educate Volunteers** on which parts of the plant are safe to use.
  - **Keep a Garden Journal** with planting, harvesting, and usage notes.
  - **Avoid Overuse** of strong medicinal herbs — always consult a herbalist or health advisor for therapeutic doses.
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## *Safety Notes*

- Always check herb-drug interactions.
  - Some herbs are not safe during chemotherapy - check with a practitioner.
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