

Garden Party

There are few pleasures that compare to eating something fresh from the garden. And what simpler thing to grow than herbs? They require little space, need minimal care and yield big flavor. During winter months, packaged herbs are a godsend. But in the summertime, nothing beats grabbing a handful of greens from the yard to flavor a dish or adorn a table. Growing your own herbs is more economical than the store packaged variety, too, especially when planting perennials. And at the end of growing season, herbs can be dried for winter use or tied together for aromatic bouquets.

If you don't have the space for a specific herb garden, plant them in your flower bed or vegetable garden, or if you lack a garden altogether, herbs will grow in a window box or windowsill. Once your herbs begin to grow, you'll find plenty of uses for them.

The following popcorn snack recipe calls for rosemary and thyme but any number of herbs will work. For an extra yummy touch, toss with a few shavings of parmesan cheese.

Spicy Rosemary and Thyme Popcorn

1 quart popped popcorn
1 teaspoon roasted red pepper oil
1 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme leaves
1/4 teaspoon minced rosemary
1/4 teaspoon kosher or table salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Preheat oven to 325° F. Spread popcorn on a baking sheet and sprinkle with roasted red pepper oil. Sprinkle with thyme, rosemary salt and pepper. Bake 7 minutes and serve warm.

Yield: 2, 2-cup servings

Savory Popcorn de Provence

8 cups popped popcorn
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter or margarine
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
2 tablespoon herbs de Provence (a blend of dried marjoram, thyme, summer savory, basil, rosemary, sage, and fennel)

Melt butter in small saucepan; add garlic and cook 1 minute. Stir in herbs de Provence. Place popcorn in large bowl. Toss flavored butter mixture over popcorn; serve immediately.

Yield: 8 servings

