

Herbs can stimulate all the senses and are an ideal plant to grow in any school. Most varieties are easy to raise from cuttings or seed and they can be grown in many different ways. Most do best in a sunny position, though mint, chervil and chives are all happy in the shade. Because of their cultural links, herbs are also well-suited to historical or symbolic plantings. Smaller herbs that make neat plants are good for planting in patterns, or incorporating in a herb book.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Foundation Stage

1,2,4,6

Design & Technology

KS1 – 1 abcde, 2 abcdef, 3 ab, 4 ab, 5 abc

KS2 – 1 abcd, 2 abcdef, 3 abc, 4 ab, 5 abc

KS3 – 1 abcdefgh, 2 abcde, 3 abc, 4 bc, 7b

Science

KS1 – SC1, SC2

KS2 – SC1, SC2

KS3 – SC1, SC2

PSHE & Citizenship

KS1 – 1 ac, 2 abccegh, 3a, 5abcd

KS2 – 1c, 2ahj, 3a, 4a, 5ade

HOW TO MAKE a Herb Book

If you have no space for a raised herb bed, a herb book is an excellent short-term alternative. The original concept for the book of herbs arose from a residency week with an artist held at Ebchester CE Primary School, County Durham which encouraged pupils to explore and interpret their local area. The creation of the herb book began as a drama project exploring the life of Katherine Elliot, a local woman accused of witchcraft in the medieval period. The outcome was an outdoor plant bed that looked like a medieval book but was filled with growing herbs.

The herb book is made of wood and willow, in two halves, positioned close together to look like an open book. To make the base, cut two pieces of 1cm marine ply 100cm x 80cm. Screw four legs 30cm long cut from 5cm x 5cm timber to the underside of each rectangular board.

Make an edge for each half, approximately 20cm deep, to retain the compost by fixing four wooden planks securely at the corners and onto the base board. An attractive alternative is to create a willow basketweave section around the edge. Ebchester did this with the help of a local basketweaver.

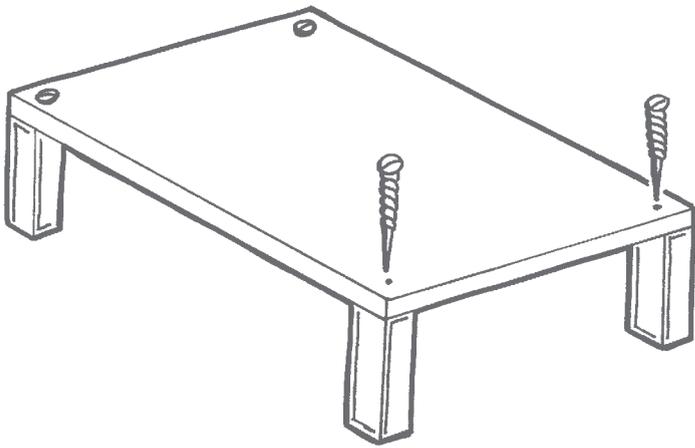
Once completed, put both halves of the book as closely together as possible and line with rot-proof permeable material (such as thin capillary matting or woven plastic mulch). The four legs adjacent to the spine can be cut shorter, or pushed down into soft ground to angle the sides of the book slightly.

Fill each half of the book with multipurpose compost. Plant herbs in rows, using a different herb for each line, then cover the soil with fine bark chippings or cocoa shell to retain moisture. Cut thin wooden batten into 60cm lengths, write the name of a herb on each and place them directly underneath the appropriate line of herbs, thus resembling lines in a book. An extra piece of batten can be fixed down the centre of the book to form a spine.

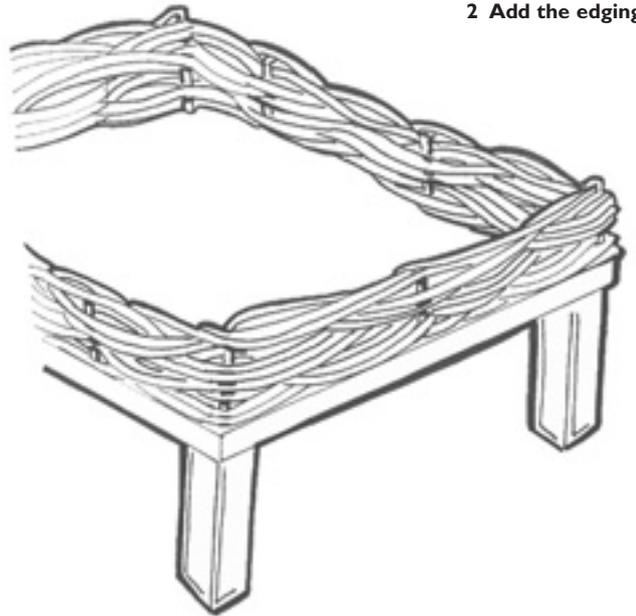
Plait thick string to create a length of rope about 1.2m long, tie a knot at the end and tease out the ends to make a tassel. This forms the bookmark and can be attached to the spine.

Most herbs can be raised cheaply and easily from seed or cuttings. Choose herbs that are naturally compact, and trim them regularly with scissors to keep them neat. If you stick to edible herbs you can even use the trimmings (well washed) in sandwiches and as garnishes. Even so, the plants will soon outgrow the space, so the book is best replanted each year afresh. Good choices include chives, feverfew, thymes, sages, rosemary, small-leaved basil, hyssop, and winter savory.

1 Fix the legs to the base boards



2 Add the edging



3 The completed book



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more on growing and using herbs: **HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH HERB GARDEN** by Kay N. Sanecki published by Ward Lock ISBN 0-7063-6990-4

GARDENING WITH HERBS, by John Stevens, published by Collins & Brown., ISBN 1-85585-224-1 **THE ULTIMATE HERB GARDENER** by Barbara Segall published by Ward Lock ISBN 0-7063-7690-0 **BEST HERBS** by Stefan Buczacki published by Hamlyn ISBN 0-600-58338-4

To find a local basketmaker contact **THE BASKETMAKERS ASSOCIATION** www.basketassoc.org