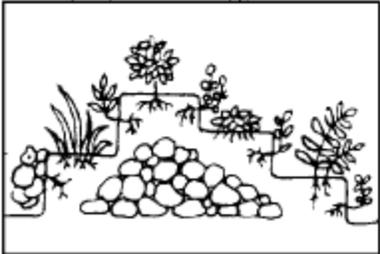
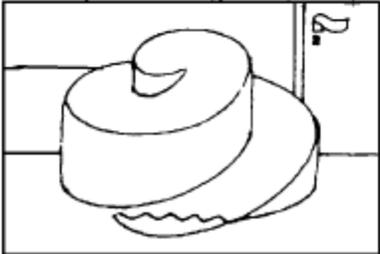


HERB SPIRAL





An herb spiral is a raised circular bed designed to provide herbs with a variety of growing conditions. They've been around since the middle ages and are once again in vogue among gardeners, especially those who practice permaculture.

Herbs that prefer drier conditions are placed near the top of the spiral and those that prefer more moisture are placed near the bottom. Micro-climates allow for some plants to have access to more heat and others less. Shadier spots near the north side favor herbs that prefer less direct sun.

The stones, rocks, bricks or blocks used to build the spiral **retain heat absorbed during the day** and **insulate the garden at night**, keeping it warm when temperatures drop.

These materials form the backbone of the spiral structure which is filled with organic matter and nutrients to plant into. The spiral is **watered from the top** and **moisture filters down to the bottom, creating different moisture zones**. The bottom of the spiral can be closed off with bricks/rocks/blocks or left open to allow water to flow into a **small pond or bog garden at the bottom**, ideal for frogs or edible water plants that prefer a wet environment. The niches in between the bricks/rocks can be planted with shallow rooted ground cover herbs like oregano or pennyroyal.

Herb Spirals can be orientated so they are **built in the same direction that water flows down a drain**. Water rotates down a drain in a clockwise direction in the Northern hemisphere, and anti-clockwise in the Southern hemisphere – likewise in the herb spiral garden. In our Southern hemisphere here in Australia, the bottom of the spiral where the pond is sited (if using one) faces south – this helps reduce evaporation and maximise moisture and shade. The reverse applies for the Northern hemisphere.

1. Grow more food in less space. The mounded spiral ramp maximises the surface area for planting. Herb spirals can be built on a base as small as a 1m diameter so even the tiniest garden can maximise [vertical](#) growing potential.

2. More variety in a range of microclimates. There's a perfect zone for all your herbs – position sun worshipping oil-rich herbs like rosemary, sage and thyme at the top; water loving shade herbs such as watercress and mints at the bottom; and your other herbs in between, where best suits their needs. With these diverse microclimates, you can **grow plants that prefer different growing conditions all in the one garden space**.

3. Healthier herbs. When you meet their growing needs (sun, water and shade), your plants will thrive and be far more productive. You can group and plant them according to their growing habit as well. Like an umbrella, taller herbs can help shade those that prefer more sun protection.

4. Beautiful garden feature. A striking curved spiral draws the eye as a **focal point** for your garden. It creates height; becomes a unique talking point for visitors; and is aesthetically pleasing, particularly when most garden designs focus on low horizontal beds and [containers](#).

5. Concrete jungles are no barrier. Herb spirals can be built straight on top of concrete or hard surfaces.

6. Convenient, easy access for maintenance and harvesting. If you have limited space and mobility or suffer from a bad back when you garden, you can **effortlessly reach to the centre of the spiral** and can **plant your most used plants at waist height – no bending!** Plus you have the convenience of shopping in your [backyard supermarket](#) without having to leave home.

7. Save money. Considering the rising cost of food, a herb spiral will quickly pay for itself after you've been harvesting for a season or two. With busy lifestyles and little time to menu plan and cook efficiently, fresh food often ends up wasted in the fridge. Only picking **WHAT** you need, **WHEN** you need it definitely saves you money.

8. Low maintenance – If you feel large gardens take too much time and effort, a herb spiral may be a solution. After initial construction, only minimal maintenance is required – attending to watering, harvesting and topping up with mulch.

9. Save time, energy and food miles. Growing the bulk of your herb requirements at your kitchen door is extremely energy and time efficient. No fuel is consumed driving to the grocery store for last minute herbs; no refrigeration or energy is used in storage when you pick your herbs fresh as you need them; and no time is wasted travelling.

10. Water management. If you live in a high rainfall area, **this design maximises drainage**; if you live in a dry climate, you will **benefit from the moisture retained at the base** of the spiral. By locating plants that don't drink much at the top, no water is wasted – runoff is collected and absorbed as it filters down to the thirsty plants at the bottom. If you include a pond pump at the bottom, you can recirculate water back up to the top – a dry climate solution.

11. Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Most fragrant herbs are useful as pest deterrents so interplanting your herb garden with fast growing salad ingredients like lettuce, rocket/arugula, spinach, and Asian greens is a strategy to help more food to make it to your table before it gets eaten! Pest insects are less likely to bother them when they are neighbours with strong smelling herbs.

12. Easy Companion Planting. Many herbs have mutually beneficial relationships with other plants. Flowering herbs also attract beneficial pollinating insects like bees, butterflies and wasps. Growing the herbs 'up close and personal' in a herb spiral helps the overall health of your garden – **flavours improve, less pests and better pollination**. Include herbs like [chamomile](#), borage, calendula, French marigolds and [nasturtiums](#).

13. Low cost to [build](#). Use whatever materials you have easy access to or can use to retain the soil. If you make your own compost, the cost will be minimal. Landscape and salvage yards may have small quantities of blocks or building materials you can get for a bargain – look for end of line sales; cracked or chipped pavers or bricks (which can be faced inwards on your spiral); and rocks from cancelled jobs, or advertised in the classifieds or weekend garage sales.

14. Simple to irrigate. Drip irrigation can be integrated up the centre and along the spiral planting ramp during construction and connected to your water mains, making watering effortless and time saving. Alternatively a central sprinkler will avoid wasting water.

15. Create habitat and biodiversity. Beneficial creatures like lizards and frogs will move in to your pond or bog garden at the bottom.