



trellis

Have a Go at Handling Herbs



Handling herbs makes for a great sensory experience - from strong scented mints to tactile chamomile and dill. Along with being multi-sensory, handling herbs can be enjoyed as a tabletop activity.

You don't need a large planter or patch to successfully grow a selection of herbs. In fact, a confined growing space works better for most herbs. Harvesting their leaves regularly promotes fresh tender growth and deters the herbs from becoming leggy, woody, less palatable and unsightly.

And don't despair if growing herbs is not possible—supermarket shelves regularly stock a good selection of little pots of herbs or packs of cut herbs.



Herbs : every shape and shade of green

When handling herbs, the first sense to be evoked is **SIGHT**. The foliage of herbs is generally 'green', but look closer and you will see thin green stems, frothy green leaves, flat crinkly green leaves, greenish purple and gold variegated leaves, and everything in between.

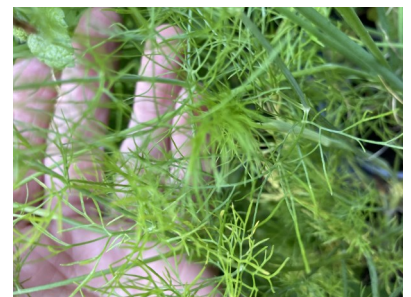
Now that we're looking closer, our hands will be desperately wanting to **TOUCH**. Some stems and leaves are smooth, some are curly or wrinkled, and now that we're touching the leaves, their scents will be released via the plant's essential oils.

Our noses will be working over-time as we **SMELL** the fresh scents of mint, the zinginess of lemon balm or scrunch the foliage of dill at your nose, and smell its aniseed scent.

I've mentioned crinkly leaves. Scrunch thyme close to your ears and you'll **HEAR** that it's not just its scent that is sensory.

But what a joy for the **TASTE** buds. We smelt the mint—now let's try it chopped finely over a delicious Italian ice cream, or in a cheeky mocktail. Lavender flowers folded into a cake mix or used as decoration adds a subtle flavour that will get folks guessing what's in the sweet cake delight. And of course, Parsley—the kitchen cook's go-to herb. A must-have in a door step pot. Although herbs are edible, it is advisable to check to ensure that any herbs you taste do not mis-interact with medications.

Gather the herbs, gather around and start passing around the herbs!



Heavenly to handle

For more gardening activity ideas visit www.trellisscotland.org.uk/activities
Need help, advice, or further information? visit our website or call 01738 624348



trellis

Have a Go at Handling Herbs continued

If time and concentration allows, try this activity after passing around the little pots of herbs. Or save it for another day. Spread the benefits of the soothing effects of handling over many sessions!

Step 1. Gather lots of stems from as many different herbs as you can—remember that herb plants benefit greatly from being harvested regularly, which promotes fresh new growth—ideal for making teas or just immersing yourself in.



Step 1



Step 2

Step 2. Have jam jars filled two-thirds with cold water and/or small drinks coasters (charity shops are a good source, or cut up thick card), with some elastic bands and scissors to hand.

Step 3. Cut herb stems to size to be twice the height of the jam jar and/or cut stems to the length and/or height of the coaster.



Step 3

Step 4. For clients who may be overwhelmed by choice and/or decision making, prepare individual plates holding a selection of pre-cut herb stems, along with a coaster with elastic bands crisscrossed to make a lattice.



Step 4

Step 5. Encourage and support if necessary, clients to insert the stems through the lattice. A simple, scented display is now theirs to give as a gift, or keep by their bedside, benefiting from the herbs' natural calming qualities.



Step 5

Step 6. The more steady handed, or those looking for a fuller challenge, may enjoy creating a vase display of herb stems. Many herbs produce flowers if not harvested—mint flowers are particularly pleasantly scented too.



Step 6

A simple ribbon tied around a jam jar's neck, gives the finishing touch.

Extension activities include taking a walk to gather in the herbs, making herbal teas and infusions, making herbal bath tea bags and of course, sharing with the kitchen cook, and enjoying fresh flavours with dinner.

See these Trellis Activity Sheets for inspiration:

How to Take Tea in the Garden and How to make Herbal Bath Tea Bags—both available to download at www.trellisscotland.org/uk/content/factsheets

For more gardening activity ideas visit www.trellisscotland.org.uk/activities
Need help, advice, or further information? visit our website or call 01738 624348