



How to Grow a Complete Diet with Permaculture Principles: Tropical Subsistence Gardening. 24 part class series

Perennial Culinary Herbs: Culantro, Blue Basil, Cuban Oregano etc. part 21 of 24

Acknowledgements: A special thanks to Hawaiian Sanctuary, County of Hawaii Research and Development and all others involved to make these classes a reality! We are still looking for support to complete and enhance this amazing FREE program. <http://hawaiiansanctuary.com/donate>

Introduction: Many annual culinary herbs require frequent replanting, while perennial herbs with the same flavors can grow for many years with little care! Plant these near kitchen for ease of harvest.

African Blue Basil

Anatomy: Herb 3-5 ft tall and wide, underside of the leaves purplish, flowers light purple

Niche in a Food Forest: full sun, prolific blooms, excellent insectary plant.

Propagation: from cuttings, 4 inches to several feet long, bury $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of cutting in soil.

Harvest: leaves, tips, flowers etc, no need to keep cutting off flowers like annual basil

Usage: as any basil, seasoning, pesto, etc.

Culantro (perennial cilantro substitute)

Anatomy: plant has clumping rosette shape, to 1ft tall and wide, toothed leaves and central spiky flower stalk.

Niche in a Food Forest: part to full shade, can grow in sun but flowers more, kitchen garden ideal

Propagation: from division, or from seed

Harvest: harvest individual leaves, keep cutting back flower heads to encourage more leaf growth

Usage: as cilantro, in salsas, cooked dishes etc., young spiky flower heads can be used after put in blender.

Cuban Oregano

Anatomy: low growing to 1 ft, vigorously spreading groundcover,

Niche in a Food Forest: full sun, can be a groundcover around young fruit trees, blooms frequently, scent may repellant to some pests

Propagation: from cuttings, very easy, no need to remove leaves

Harvest: individual leaves, wash very thoroughly.

Usage: as oregano, chop finely due to fuzziness of leaves

Mitsuba (perennial parsley)

Anatomy: clump forming herb 1-2 ft tall and wide. Tri-lobe leaves on a long stalk.

Niche in a Food Forest: Full sun-part shade, kitchen garden, may at as a biennial sometimes

Propagation: from seed or division of clump, easier to grow and longer lasting than parsley

Harvest: individual leaves

Usage: As parsley, similar flavor. Tabouli, to flavor raw or cooked dishes.

Garlic Chives

Anatomy: clump forming with grass-like leaves 1-2 ft tall and wide, purple flowers on stalks

Niche in a Food Forest: full sun to part shade, good for beneficial insects scattered around kitchen garden.

Propagation: from division of clumps easiest, can grow from seed but takes a long time.

Harvest: individual leaves, scissors may be helpful, flowers edible as well, with garlic taste.

Usage: Where light garlic flavor is needed. Not a replacement for bulb garlic which usually struggles here.

Variegated Water Celery

Anatomy: aquatic/wetland plant that is considered a noxious weed in some parts of Hawaii, use caution.

Niche in a Food Forest: variegated form much less aggressive than all green. Grow in bucket or water feature.

Propagation: from cuttings or division

Harvest: individual leaves, wash very thoroughly,

Usage: celery like flavor, stems do not get large and crunchy like celery stems.

Lemongrass

Anatomy: clumping grass 3-4 ft tall and wide. Never flowers. Similar to citronella which gets bigger and flowers.

Niche in a Food Forest: full sun to light shade, good edge plant to help keep weeds out of areas

Propagation: from division, must include plant base, ideal to trim back leaves just above where they separate.

Harvest: individual thin leaves, or entire stalk including swollen base, can snap off or cut.

Usage: can flavor teas or steamed carb crops, can be sliced to season soups etc. in curry paste & Thai dishes.

Curry Leaf (Curry Berry)

Anatomy: tree to 20 ft tall. Compound leaves with white flowers followed by purple/black berries.

Niche in a Food Forest: full sun, can provide shade for other plants, near kitchen for ease of use.

Propagation: from seed, often young trees will be sprouting under established trees which can be dug with care.

Harvest: leaves and be used fresh or dried, berries are also edible sweet and pleasant with curry flavor.

Usage: used to flavor indian dishes, curries etc., often leaves are fried in oil to impart flavor.

Kefir Lime

Anatomy: thorny tree to 30 ft tall. Can be pruned back to keep small, or even container grown.

Niche in a Food Forest: can provide shade for other plants

Propagation: from seed, air layer, or grafting

Harvest: mature leaves, or rind of the small bumpy fruit can be grated and used

Usage: leaves are used whole to flavor Thai soups, ground as part of curry paste. etc.

Mamake

Anatomy: bush 6-18 ft tall and wide, green leaves with red midrib. Bears white, bland, mulberry like berries.

Niche in a Food Forest: partial shade ideal, full shade to full sun

Propagation: from seed, mash fruits in water, seeds sink, separate pulp, pour seed and water on soil do not cover.

Harvest: individual leaves

Usage: fresh or dry for teas, traditional Hawaiian medicinal plant.

Mint

Anatomy: to 1ft tall, many varieties, spreads vigorously from underground runners.

Niche in a Food Forest: prefers part sun to full shade, moist conditions, careful... it can take over areas

Propagation: from cuttings, can be grown in pots or with barriers to prevent spread, or plant where can run.

Harvest: leaves as needed, be careful to wash thoroughly

Usage: for teas and flavoring sweet and savory dishes.

Dry loving herbs: rosemary, creeping thyme, sage, true oregano, lavender

These may need protection from water for example in pots along a south facing eve. with plenty of sun.

Rosemary, true oregano and creeping thyme may do fine outdoors in drier areas.

Next Class: Thursday Sept. 7th **Pest & Disease Management:** (will not cover fire ants. separate class on fire ants on Saturday.) Will cover slugs, pigs, banana bunchy top, phytophthora, root knot nematode and more...

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