

SunKiSS Gardens



D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

Featured Products

Three Amigos features cilantro, oregano, and hot peppers. This combination is the perfect way to heat up your salsa and other Mexican favorites this winter!

Pizza Partners will liven up your homemade pizza - or even a frozen one! - with the flavors of oregano, basil, and thyme. These herbs also add pizzazz to a variety of other Italian dishes.

Turkey Trio features sage, thyme, and parsley - just the right combination for flavoring poultry, stuffing, soups, and stews all winter long.

Sunny Salad Mix combines basil, parsley, and lemon gem marigolds to brighten up your winter. The herbs and edible flowers will add a refreshing tang to salads.

We also have **Apple and Cinnamon Basil Potpourri** for sale in limited quantities.

Sneak Preview

Spring is just around the corner...?!



We plan to offer herbs for sale through the holidays and into January, depending on our inventory. Check our Web site for farmers market dates. We'll also have items for sale at Valley Natural Foods in Burnsville, and we're getting set up to sell on-line through Local Harvest and Local Dirt (for local pick-up only; no shipping). Then we'll be turning our thoughts toward spring! We anticipate a new round of herbs being ready by Mother's Day. Stay tuned to our Web site for more frequent updates!

Thank you!

As we look back on our first year in business, it's startling to realize that at this time in 2008, we had no idea we were about to become herb growers! The idea was hatched around New Year's, and what a ride it has been. We would like to thank everyone for their support and for the opportunities we've been given - the Bloomington Farmers Market, Valley Natural Foods, the Governor's Residence, our families and friends, and of course our customers! Happy Holidays and many blessings in the new year!

ABOUT US: Kevin does environmental consulting by day and grows herbs by night. Sarah is an ecologist, educator, and writer and manages the business aspects of herb-growing. And Sam is our inspiration! That's us below, at the Bloomington Farmers Market in June 2009.



Holiday Herbs



Herbs Invoke Both Flavor and Symbolism

For many people, turkey dressing wouldn't be complete without the sage, and the holidays wouldn't be quite so festive without a cinnamon stick in the apple cider. For as long as people have been cooking up delicious foods to celebrate the holidays, they have been using herbs and spices to impart traditional flavors. Many herbs also carry special meanings, depending on your ethnic and religious heritage. Here are just a few examples:

- Basil - Love and good wishes, herbs of kings
- Marigold - Mary's plant, friendship flower
- Marjoram and Oregano - Joy, happiness, kindness
- Parsley - Mary's little finger, festivity, feast
- Sage - Immortality, health, happiness
- Thyme - Bravery, a manger herb

Source: Linda T. Collins, Master Gardeners
Aransas/San Patricio Master Gardeners,
AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M System.

Growing Herbs Indoors During the Winter

The winter months add a few extra challenges to growing herbs in containers, but the pleasure of adding something fresh to your food makes it worth the effort! Here are some tips:

Soil in small pots dries out quickly, especially with the dry winter air in our homes. Be careful not to overwater, however, as herbs (especially the Mediterranean ones like oregano, thyme, and sage) don't do well when conditions are too moist.

If your herbs seem thin, spindly, or leggy, try adding artificial light (up to 12 hours a day). Contact us for help or do an Internet search for "Lighting Indoor Houseplants" - a helpful publication from Missouri Extension should show up.

Herb flavor is reduced when they are fertilized too much - so add plant food sparingly (not more than every 4-6 weeks) and use it at half the recommended strength. Use cues from the plant (such as yellowing on the lower leaves) rather than the calendar.

Marigolds and peppers have different fertilizing needs than herbs because we *want* them to flower! If your plant is slow to flower or produces few flowers, try adding more light and/or use a "bloom builder" type of plant food.

Spicy Turkey Sausage

The book Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life, by Barbara Kingsolver and family, was an inspiring account of eating local foods. This recipe from the book is a hearty addition to the winter menu!

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| 2 ½ lb. raw turkey meat diced, including dark meat and fat | 2 tsp. fresh oregano (or 1 tsp. dry) |
| ½ cup chopped onion | 2 tsp. fresh thyme (or 1 tsp. dry) |
| ¼ cup chopped garlic | 1 tsp. ground black pepper |
| ½ tbs. paprika | 2 tsp. cayenne (optional) |
| 1 ½ tsp. ground cumin | Hog casings (ask your butcher, optional) |

Combine seasonings in a large bowl and mix well. Toss with turkey meat until thoroughly coated. If the meat is very lean, you may need to add olive oil to moisten. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Then grind the mixture in a meat grinder or food processor. You can make patties, or stuff casings to make sausage links. An inexpensive sausage-stuffing attachment is available for KitchenAid other grinders; your butcher may know a source for hog casings.