

# Herb Spiral

The Herb Spiral is a popular and successful permaculture element, it provides a variety of positions (sun, shelter and shade) and levels of moisture (the top is dry and the base boggy). The center of the spiral is elevated and the ground falls as the spiral unfurls. The rock warms and dehumidifies the soil. The extended edge, wrapped in on itself provides a wide diversity of conditions, creating high productivity in a small space, but is easy to water and harvest. This allows you to plant, dry soil plants like rosemary at the top and water loving plants at the bottom such as watercress and water chestnuts. You should be able to reach all the parts of the spiral without having to step into it.

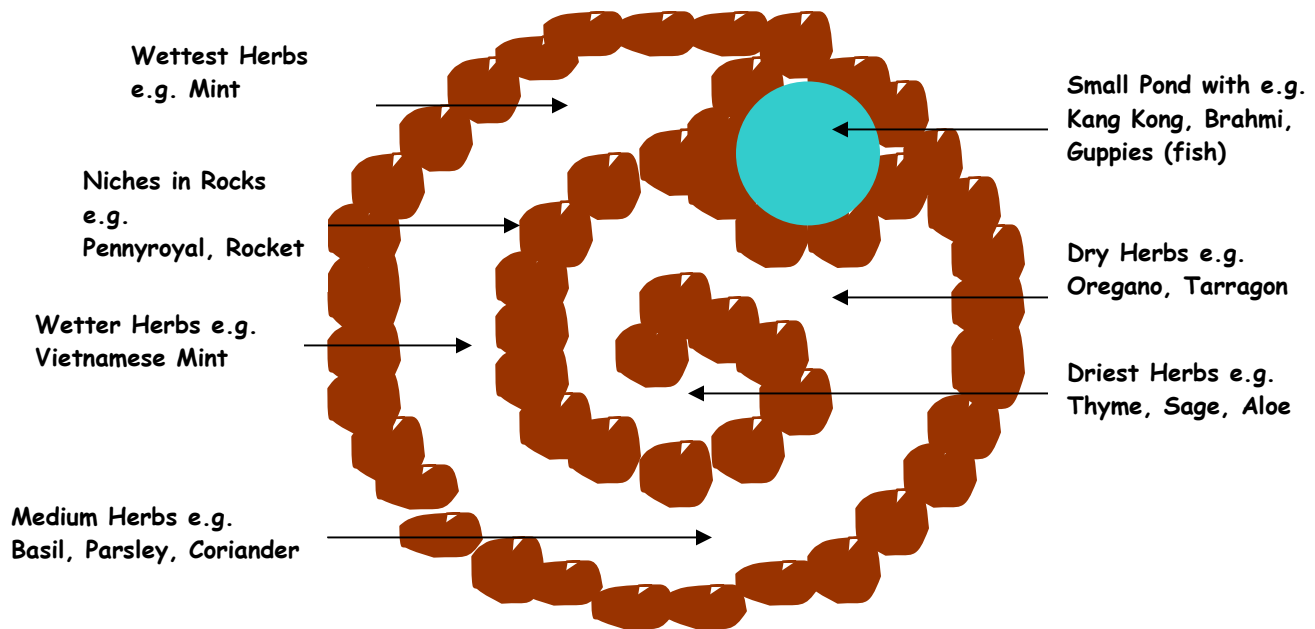
## Scale

- One meter from the middle to the edge
- The center is about a meter above the ground so you can reach to the center from the outside
- If you make it smaller, you may lose the warming effect of the rocks
- You can't really make it bigger, but its possible to put two together in a yin-yang pattern

## Construction

- Choose a site close to the kitchen entrance
- The site should get sun, although its fine if part is shaded
- Mark out 2m (6ft) circle
- Line the outside edge of that circle with stones, rocks or bricks
- The end of the spiral can be blocked with rock, or construct a small pond
- Fill the middle of the circle with soil and compost into a pyramid shape. In tropical climates some people layer the pile with small rocks, gravel and coarse sand followed by soil and compost to ensure drainage
- When filling with compost, pile it high above the rocks, and then wash it down with a hose to settle the rocks into position

# Herb Spiral Shape & Common Placement of Herbs



## Planting it out

- The Herb Spiral offers a variety of niche's for the herbs, at the top in the middle is the driest soil suitable for Rosemary, getting wetter as the water drains down towards the bottom
- Some of the spiral might be shaded by neighbouring bushes, or if something big like bay-leaf is planted, then it will give shade
- Take up the niches between the rocks with small herb ground covers like Pennyroyal
- While the herbs are growing to full size, some of the space between them can be taken with small annuals like Rocket

## Maintenance

- No significant maintenance required apart from picking herbs for the kitchen
- Water the herbs at the top of the spiral when required & let gravity do the rest

Here is a table providing information for the siting of a few common herbs.

<b>Common name</b>	<b>Sun/Shade</b>	<b>Soil type</b>
Lavender	Sun facing	Poor soil, rocks
Catmint, clary	Sunny	Fertile loam
Bee Balm	Partial shade	
Yarrow	Partial shade	
Comfrey	Sun/part shade	Moist
Oregano	Full sun	Good, well drained
Thyme	Sun	Well drained, fair soil
Tansy	Shade/morning sun	Good
Borage	Full sun	Dry
Sage	Full sun	Dry
Sweet bay	Full sun frost tolerant	Container/med. soil.
Mints	Shade/part sun	Moist, fertile
Cumin	Full sun	Poor-good
Coriander	Full sun	Shelter from wind, poor-good
Violet	Semi-shade	Competes well with grass in moist soil, shallow rooted.
Rosemary	Sun	Dry well drained soil
Garlic	Sun	Well rotted compost, moist well drained
Parsley	Full sun/part shade - likes afternoon sun	Fertile humus rich soil
Lemon Balm	Full sun/part shade	Fertile, moist

Enjoy!