



THE LAB

Eight pages of things to make and do

TOP TIP
Paint your pots in different colours to make your windowsill look even brighter.



Grow your own herbs

Bring summer inside by creating a fragrant mini-garden on your windowsill.

What you need

- Clean plastic pots (one for each type of herb)
- Scissors
- Handfuls of compost or potting soil
- Packs of herb seeds, such as basil, chives, coriander and mint
- One saucer for every pot (or a large tray)
- Watering can or a jug of water
- Clean lolly sticks
- Colouring pens
- A sunny windowsill

Instructions

- 1** Ask a grown-up to help you pierce holes in the bottom of each pot. Fill each pot two-thirds full of compost or potting soil.
- 2** Carefully sprinkle five or more seeds into each pot. Spread them out evenly.
- 3** Add more compost or soil so that the seeds are completely covered, then pat down the surface lightly.
- 4** Place each of your pots on a saucer or a tray, then water them until the soil feels moist but not soggy.
- 5** Grab a lolly stick for each pot. Write down one herb name on each stick, and push it into the soil in the relevant pot.
- 6** Place all of the pots on a windowsill – the sunnier the better. Water every few days so that the soil remains damp.
- 7** Some herbs, such as basil, will sprout within a few days but others might take a few weeks, so be patient!
- 8** Once your herbs have fully grown, pick off some of their leaves and use them to flavour your favourite recipes.



Look out for the first shoots in the soil.

How does it work?

A seed contains everything a plant needs to grow but conditions must be suitable. Herbs flourish in soil that contains the right mix of minerals and a decent amount of water. Minerals are substances that plants absorb through their roots that they need for healthy growth. The seed sucks up water, triggering chemical reactions that begin the process of growth. The seed grows a root to get more water and sends up a shoot that bursts through the soil. Then your herb can grow its tasty leaves, which help it to harvest energy from the Sun.

REX SHUTTERSTOCK