

# Harvesting Herbs at Their Peak

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Early June is when herbs shift from growing to giving. Warm days and long light hours push essential oils into the leaves. This means **maximum flavor, fragrance, and potency** right now.

Catch herbs at their most aromatic during morning harvests. Best time is after dew dries and before heat rises. This way, you lock in the brightest oils and slow wilting.



Use growth stage, rather than the calendar now. Instead of waiting for buds, June is about reading the plant.

- Leafy herbs like basil, mint, lemon balm: harvest when stems are lush and branching.
- Woody herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage: take tender new tips, not older woody stems.

Prevent bitterness before it starts. Remove flower buds as soon as they appear as this keeps leaves sweet and productive through summer heat.

Quick June cues

- Basil: Top frequently to prevent bolting.
- Mint/Oregano: Harvest every 1–2 weeks for best flavor.
- Parsley: Take outer stems only; let the crown keep pushing new growth.
- Chives: Shear to 2" after flowering for a fresh flush.

June matters because regular early-summer harvesting keeps herbs from getting leggy, bitter, or stressed and sets you up for abundant harvests all season.

## Resources:

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) – Herb Growing & Harvesting Guides

<https://mgnv.org/plants/veg-herbs/seasonal-guide-growing-herbs/>

OSU Extension – Herb Harvesting Basics

<https://extension.osu.edu/today/herb-growing-and-use>

NC State Extension – Harvesting and Preserving Herbs for the Home Gardener

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/harvesting-and-preserving-herbs-for-the-home-gardener>

Photo by Judith Kohnen