

Latin Name/Genus: *Thymus vulgaris* (English or Common Thyme), *T. serpyllum* (Creeping Thyme)
Family: *Lamiaceae*

Difficulty: Challenging/slow

Season: Warm-cool season

Exposure: Full-sun

Zone: Hardy to Zone 4

Timing: Sow thyme indoors late winter to mid-spring; transplant out once soil begins to warm, or direct sow late May through June. Ideal soil temperature for germination: 15-21°C.

Starting: Sow thyme's dust-like seeds on the surface of dampened, sterilized seed starting mix under bright light with bottom heat; keep watering to a minimum, as thyme seedlings are prone to damping off. When seedlings are large enough, harden them off and transplant to the garden or to containers, spacing them at 23-38cm (9-15") apart.

Growing: Trim thyme plants back once they have flowered to encourage bushy growth; protect container-grown plants from cold as winter approaches, and water only as necessary - damp, cold soil will kill thyme.

Nutrient Preferences: Thyme loves a smaller, balanced feeding of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium each spring; appreciates nitrogen, but be careful not to overfeed.

Harvest: Fresh thyme leaves can be harvested at any time of the year as long as the plants are established - prune back any dead branches; whole stems/branches can be clipped and dried whole, or individual leaves can be left to dry in a dark, airy spot for long term storage.

Companion Planting: Thyme is a thoroughly beneficial plant for the garden, and is particularly worth planting near brassicas (it repels cabbage moths), and strawberries (it enhances their flavour).

