



The benefits of growing herbs in homegardens

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Forest gardens or homegardens are species-rich systems where forest and fruit species, horticultural and agricultural crops and grazing animals have a mutually beneficial relationship with each other and their environment. That is why this intensive form of farming will be stable and diversified.

The basis of a well-established organic permaculture garden is the good design. The first step is the identification of the place on the map, its orientation, and the climate, precipitation and soil condition.

When designing the planting structure, terrain and slope exposure and light demand of plants should be also taken into account as the yield and the essential oil content of herbs is influenced by the amount of light. In designing, we follow the principle of vertical levelling, which includes both higher and lower trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, creeper plants, and the levels of gourmet and wetland habitats.

Herbs have an important role to play in several aspects. They can be used, for example, as a disease prevention or as a phytotherapeutic veterinary supplement (eg chamomile, black alder, thyme, peppermint, marigold, pitch grass, juniper, garlic). Many plant associations are known to have a beneficial effect on herbaceous plants and fruits (eg strawberries / tomatoes - garlic, green beans-beetroot, lettuce - mustard).

Last but not least, they are good at supporting biological plant protection, because the juices and teas made from them (eg large chanterelle, horsetail, dandelion, garlic) help to protect the crops from pests and pathogens.

More information about companion planting including the basic principles can be found here:

<http://urban.agroeco.org/publications/companion-planting/>

More info about organic farming and permaculture:

<https://www.agricology.co.uk>



Figure 1. Alley cropping with garlic in Hungary. Photo: Kanyó I. (above) Herbs planted in the alleys of a Hungarian AF system. Photo: Vityi A. (below)

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