

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to grow a tea garden:

When most people think of a garden, they think of topics like a vegetable garden, as herb garden, a flower garden or even a fruit garden. However, there's another type of garden gardeners can look into growing, one that's very unique. This type of garden is called a tea garden.

Tea originated in China thousands of years ago, and today it is one of the most widely consumed beverages in the world. People may think it's one of the more unique and difficult things to grow, but that's actually not the case. You can grow your own tea garden right at home.

Ways to grow a tea garden:

Most Americans can make their own tea by growing an herb garden and using ingredients such as mint or lavender. There are several different types of tea you can grow, including chamomile, mint, lemon balm, echinacea and more.

Chamomile, a tea known mostly for its calming effects, can be grown in the garden and will produce a small, daisy-like flower. Chamomile grows easily when it can lose its mature seed while in the garden. However, it doesn't tolerate hot temperatures well, such as those above 98 degrees. Harvest the branches when they have several flowers that are open and then hang them to dry. Remove the blooms and store them in an airtight container when the stems have dried. Steep the dried flowers in boiling water for 5 to 10 minutes.

Mint can be grown in almost any conditions, and it prefers full sun. It also spreads easily.



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Tear up the fresh leaves and steep them in boiling water for up to 10 minutes.

Lemon balm can make a tea that will help with headaches, and it has calming properties. Grow the lemon balm in a pot so it doesn't spread as easily, and harvest its leaves when the flowers are beginning to bloom. Steep a few of the fresh leaves in boiling water for two to five minutes.

For echinacea, you can use the entire plant to make tea. It is hardy and withstands winters, but won't produce well until its second year. If growing in a hot climate, grow in partial shade so it doesn't get too hot.

Growing tea with caffeine:

Many people drink tea to experience the high that comes along with digesting caffeine. To grow tea with caffeine, you will need to grow the camellia sinensis plant. The leaves contain caffeine. Teas that are brewed without using camellia sinensis are



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called tinctures, but tea brewed with *Camellia sinensis* are full teas. *Camellia sinensis* grows best in USDA hardiness zones 7-9. Colder climates can still grow the tea plant by keeping it in a greenhouse or a pot that can be moved indoors when it gets cold. White, green, oolong and black tea can all be made from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, it just depends on when and what parts of the plant you harvest.



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