

Homegrown herbs add flavor to dishes

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

When it comes to herbs, we've gone from parsley and chives to a new world of flavors.



"People are asking for shiso and ginger root," said Meg Gray, buyer for Green Acres nursery in Sacramento. "Stevia is at the top of everyone's list."

Herbs spice up our meals and our gardens. And as interest in global cuisines grow, so does our appetite for ethnically diverse herbs.

With increased interest in cooking at home, gardeners also are growing more of their own herbs, saving money while adding fresh flavor.

"You can get a whole plant for what it costs for a few sprigs of basil in the supermarket," Gray said. "And you'll have fresh herbs all summer – or longer."

And this spring, herbs also have spiked sales for nurserymen as novice and experienced gardeners dive into herbs as an easy entry to edible landscaping.

"It goes hand in hand with interest in vegetable gardening and growing your own food," said Janet Simkins of Sierra Nursery in Roseville. "Independent nurseries, such as ours, sell herbs side by side with vegetables. Even if you don't have room for a vegetable garden, you can put a few herbs in a pot and get some satisfaction, too."

It's not just about food.

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