

Kitchen herbs help stir up flavor

By Marty Figley
special writer

AKITCHEN herb garden need not be large to provide cooks with a variety of plants to add flavor and interest to their culinary endeavors.

Culinary herbs or kitchen herbs have been used for many years by cooks in all parts of the world. As travel and trade expanded through the centuries, the plants were gathered, taken home, traded and cultivated so that now most of the ones we know are very readily available throughout the world.

There may be some confusion over the difference between an herb and a spice. Herb is from the Latin herbs, which means grass or green crops.

Generally, an herb is a plant that originated in a temperate climate. The parts used are the leaves, fruits and the soft stems. Most spices originated in a tropical environment, many have

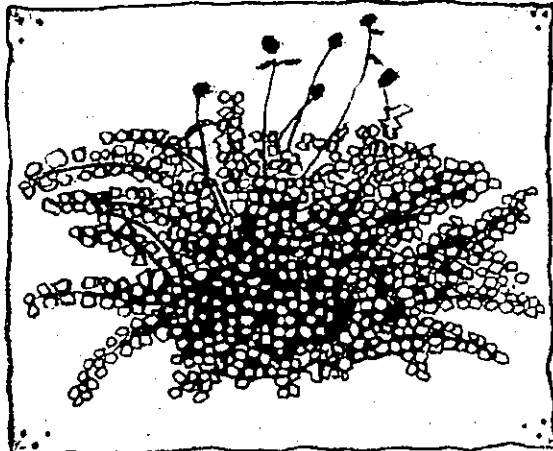
woody stems, and the parts used are the roots, bark, berries, nuts and fruits.

Many herbs die down to the root after one season and regrow from the root each year; these are perennials. Others, which die completely, are called annuals.

Centuries ago, as the popularity of these plants spread, complete gardens were formed around their shapes and sizes and elaborate formal gardens were planted.

In the 1500s in Italy, numerous herbs were grown from the Far East, the New World and Europe. Formal and knot gardens became popular and are still planted today, using both decorative and culinary herbs.

AS OUR country was established, many of the immigrants brought their favorite herbs along with them and began to grow them here. Mint.



Please turn to Page 15

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