

## Choose your location

- Find the sun, especially the morning sun. Look to the north (in the southern hemisphere) and east of your house.
- Think about your behaviour. For some people, having a herb spiral visible and accessible from the kitchen trumps all.
- Orient your spiral so that your bottom, wettest location is opposite the sun's path (in the south).

## Lay out your pattern

How far can you comfortably reach? This is your ideal radius (the distance from the widest edge to the centre). Many growers recommend a 1 metre radius, but think of this as a maximum. A long radius allows the most height and the most plants, whereas a shorter radius can increase comfort. A 0.75 metre radius will be comfortable for many. Mark your centre and your edge, then draw your full spiral.

## Decide what material you wish to use for your herb spiral's side walls

- River rock with flattish sides
- Brick
- Wooden slats planted in their ends
- Slate

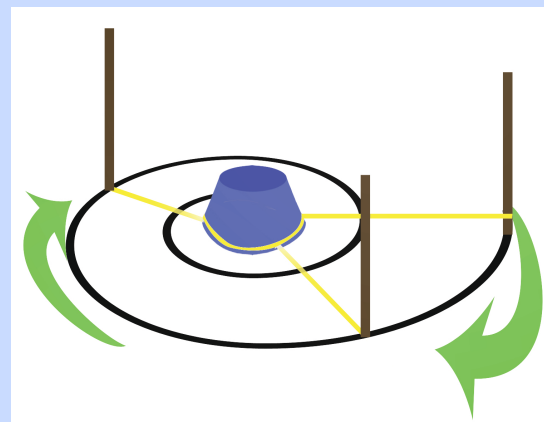
*The Internet has lots of images to help you to decide.*

## Build Up the Side Walls

- Lay down the cardboard base for your spiral. See the top image on page two, plus the note about the spiral's bottom layer.
- Lay down the bottom ring of your side wall material in a spiral pattern. You will likely want to dig your rocks or bricks into the ground a bit to add stability.
- Next add your layers of rock and soil to fill in your spiral. See the image on page two. In the outer ring of your spiral, where the spiral's final height will be at its lowest, put down all the layers. In the centre, put down the layer of small rock only. You will need to increase the height of your spiral before you add the remaining central layers.
- Continue building upwards.

## For a tidy spiral ...

- Tie a string around the base of a round, nine-litre bucket (or similar circular object).\*
- Cut the string so that the length from the centre of the bucket to the end of the string is your desired radius.



- Put your bucket at the centre of your spiral, then circle the string, allowing it to wrap around the base of your bucket. The shortening string will arc in a spiral.

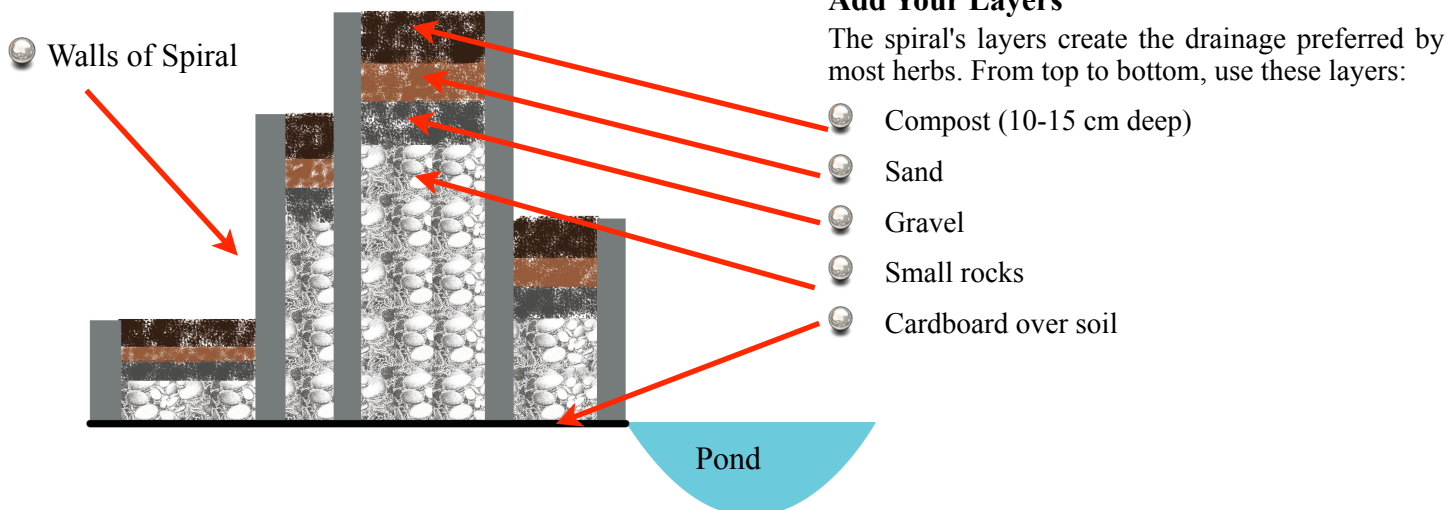
\* **Note:** Experiment with the width of your bucket, as this will determine the width of your beds. A wider bucket will mean fewer turns of the spiral, but this may be best if you are creating wide side walls (e.g. if you are using large river rock). For a tight spiral with more turns and narrower walls (e.g. brick walls), use a smaller bucket.

## Optional extras

- Mowing strip:** If you keep a small strip around your herb spiral free of grass, you can mow the surrounding area easily. Bare dirt or crushed limestone over cardboard can help clear an area that was once in lawn.
- Pond:** A pond can be made at the bottom of the herb spiral by digging down and lining an area with black plastic sheeting, or even by embedding a bowl or a bucket then covering its bottom with soil.
- Multiple spirals:** Use multiple spirals to create a more complex design. Two spirals will join together in a curly "S". With more spirals, make sure you can easily reach all your plants.
- Spirals for vegetables:** You can use the spiral shape to grow other plants so long as you adapt the soil to their needs. For vegetables, simply use a mixture of soil and compost throughout.

## Permaculture Principles at Play

- Use four dimensions—including vertical space and a mix of perennials and annuals for year-round yields.
- Catch and store energy—by using rocks and mass to store and slowly release heat to warm herbs.
- Maximise edges—with a rising spiral pattern to create a long planting edge in a compact space.
- Design your own microclimates—from hot and dry at the top to wet and subtropical at the bottom, with the possibility of shadier spots depending on your chosen location, the height of your structure, and the height of your plantings.
- Use and value diversity—with many mutually beneficial relationships created by having diverse herbs in a compact area—an excellent example of "companion planting."



**A note about the bottom layer:** The purpose of your cardboard layer is to suppress weeds. It can be laid directly over lawn to convert it to growing space.

Newspaper is your second-best bottom layer. Do not use weed mat as it won't block the grass, and it won't decompose into the soil.

You can also build your herb spiral directly onto concrete, gravel, or another barren surface (without the cardboard) to create a new productive space. Make sure your bottom ring has sufficient altitude to allow plants to root well, and sufficient drainage out the sides of the herb spiral.



## Choose and Plant your Herbs

A herb spiral with a radius of 0.5 metres can handle 15 herb varieties, more or less. A larger herb spiral can handle more herbs and bigger herbs (bay tree, rosemary, lavender). Be aware that herbs planted next to each other may influence each other's taste.

Top of Herb Spiral	Bay tree; Rosemary; Lavender; Curry Plant; Sage; Thyme; Oregano; Marjoram
Middle of Herb Spiral	Tarragon; French Marigold; Calendula; Basil; Chives; Parsley; Chamomile
Bottom of Herb Spiral	Coriander; Sweet Violet; Lemon Balm; Mint (very aggressive); Sorrel
In the Pond	Watercress; Watermint

## Tending your Herbs

- Water from the spiral's top as needed. Water will drain and pool at the bottom.
- Clip back woody herbs, especially in the first years, to keep them from getting too large and leggy.
- Add a dilute liquid fertiliser as needed. Good options are the liquid from a worm farm, or a 'tea' made by soaking seaweed, comfrey, or animal manure (chicken, alpaca etc.). Dilute so that the liquid is no darker than a very weak cup of tea, then pour into the soil around the roots of the plants. A small amount annually will often suffice.