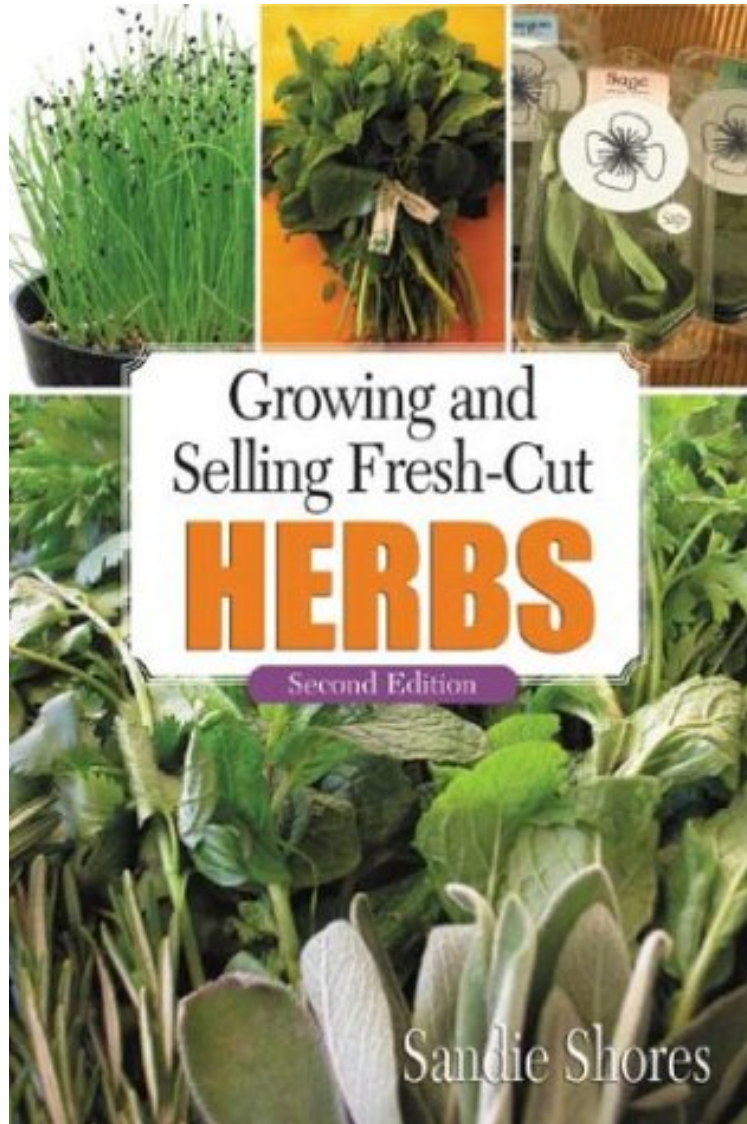


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## Growing and Selling Fresh-Cut Herbs

*Sandie Shores*

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**Sandie Shores : Growing and Selling Fresh-Cut Herbs** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Growing and Selling Fresh-Cut Herbs:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Robert G.good0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good info and tells you how to grow and sell ...By james lawrenceVery detailed. Good info and tells you how to grow and sell herbs from start to finish. I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of real life day to day info.60 of 61 people found the following review helpful. A good startBy Daisy MorganIt's obvious Sandie Shores put a lot of effort, time and heartfelt advice into this reference book, and it contains a lot of useful advice for the beginning

grower. I've been referring to this book for several years now; I have grown herbs for many years and built a greenhouse business around it. I would like to comment on a few shortcomings of this book, in hopes that those individuals choosing to go into the culinary herb growing field will refer to additional sources of information, rather than relying strictly on this one source. - One major problem is Ms. Shores' lack of emphasis toward maintaining \*healthy\* plants to effectively prevent disease and pests to begin with. She instead talks only about how to deal with pests and diseases. The more I study disease and pest control, the more I find increased emphasis on maintaining healthy plants as the best defense. Growers are now becoming aware of techniques that increase brix in plants which is a natural pest fighter, and improving and restoring healthy soil conditions through organic practices, composting, and remineralization. I have found that by greatly increasing the plant's health I have been able to effectively fight disease and pests rather than resort to time-consuming and redundant spraying which only makes me feel like I'm sometimes fighting a losing battle. - I have found contradictory or missing information compared to other resources. I had to discover through another reference that I was overwatering my bay laurel trees; there is no mention in her book that they require less water than other plants. In fact, there is no mention on how much water to give bay laurel at all. - She says mint doesn't do well in containers--I have personally found that is the only way to grow them (otherwise they are too much work) and they do very well. Refer to "Bountiful Container" by McGee and Stuckey on how to successfully grow mint in containers. - There is no mention of White Dalmatian Sage, the best sage for culinary use. - Ms. Shores claims that French Tarragon must be allowed to go dormant in the winter. However, "Bountiful Container" describes a method where you can continue to grow it through the winter. - Ms. Shores says oregano is a slow grower; McGee and Stuckey say it's a rapid grower. I think it depends on the growing environment, but it can be a rapid grower given the proper conditions. - There is no mention of fusarium oxysporum under the basil section, an untreatable, devastating fungus that can potentially wipe out your entire sweet basil crop and persist in the soil for up to 12 years. I had to find a short description of it under the soil-borne diseases section. I feel this is such an important aspect to growing basil, a very popular culinary herb, that there should have been a lot more emphasis on becoming aware of and identifying this disease. Shane Smith's book, Greenhouse Gardeners Companion, says it's believed that fusarium oxysporum now infects most of the world's supply of basil seeds. He recommended buying fusarium-resistant (Nufar) seeds and named the sources where you can buy them. - This book lacks a simplified reference to identifying plant problems. I tried looking up black spots on the basil leaves in this book but could not find any advice. Greenhouse Gardener's Companion has an excellent reference chart for looking up this kind of information. - Very puzzling, at the time of writing this review, her recommended sources for packaging supplies listed in her appendix and her website did not carry the suggested items. I've found other very useful vendors on the web that provide the supplies I needed, like clamshell packages and plastic bags for delivery. - Sometimes there was confusion whether she was talking about growing in the greenhouse versus field growing, or container growing versus bed growing. - If you're just starting out and will seek outside funding for your new herb business, the most important step is creating a detailed business plan. Even though there is a chapter devoted to business planning, there's no specific, helpful guidance on how to develop one. And here's some practical advice I've discovered on my own that you also won't find in this book: if you don't have experience as a grower professionally for many years, you won't even be considered for a bank or SBA loan. Smart Money magazine confirmed this with an article of theirs--banks will fund only 2% of new businesses, SBA only 6%, while 50% of new businesses will buy capital expenditures through the use of personal credit cards. I've stopped producing plants for cutting and instead grow herb and vegetable plants and container gardens to sell directly to the consumer. There is more satisfaction (and more money) in this, and when I discovered that wholesale distributors were selling basil in the middle of summertime for \$5.50/lb, I knew I couldn't compete with those prices and pay myself a wage. Ms. Shores' book correctly states you will not get rich selling fresh cut herbs. Ms. Shores does give excellent, useful advice on building and maintaining a greenhouse, and how to efficiently harvest herbs for packaging and selling. Other fantastic growing references: "Bountiful Container," "The Green Thumb Garden Handbook," "Secrets to a Successful Greenhouse and Business," "Herbs in Pots," "Fresh Culinary Herb Production," "Basil: An Herb Lover's Guide," and ATTRA-dot-org on the web (sorry, won't let me put the URL in this review).

This definitive guide for those looking to start or expand their own herb business focuses entirely on fresh-cut herbs for the grower who supplies restaurants or supermarkets, vends at farmers markets, or sells from her own retail space. Discussed are the value of a business plan and how to find the right niche for the business. Whether selling to supermarkets, wholesalers, brokers, or caterers, growers will benefit from these business tips. Valuable advice is provided on financing; honoring local zoning laws; creating invoices and packing slips; managing employees; pricing and marketing; maintaining accounts; and increasing business. All aspects of building a greenhouse are addressed, from selecting a prime location and building a structure to the equipment needed to grow, including lights, thermostats, benches, and irrigation systems. Other topics include growing and nurturing plants from germination through harvest; assessing the needs of different herb crops and edible flowers; and harvesting and packaging the finished product. For more information, visit [www.freshcutherbs.com](http://www.freshcutherbs.com)

.com Ready to turn your herb-gardening hobby into a business? Sandie Shores details the fundamentals of commercial herb growing in a thorough, well-organized reference. Written from the vantage of the author's 14 years of experience in the business, the information is practical and practicable. Profiles and anecdotes from other growers around the country are interspersed throughout the book. The section on business basics starts with a thoughtful discourse on personal objectives and market research and continues with site selection and a thorough list of potential customers, from restaurants to distributors. The section on greenhouses for year-round growing includes practical discussion on materials and construction, interior layout, and systems design, so there's no need to purchase a separate greenhouse reference. Further discussion of growing methods focuses on sustainability, and pest-management suggestions include preventative awareness of life cycle and preferred environments. Handling and harvesting tips, uses, and specialized packaging advice are provided for 14 different herbs, inclusive of the wide selection found in the majority of markets today. Lesser-known herbs are touched on, as are edible flowers. A list of resources and support publications concludes the book. The author takes the mystery out of this business, filling a near vacuum with this reference, but at the same time presents the potential hazards and attention required. One caveat: the black-and-white photos and sketches are generally useful, but one wishes for color pictures of the herbs themselves, given that part of the appeal of fresh herbs is the vibrant color and texture that promise romance to the nose and taste buds. --Molly McElroy

**From Booklist**This latest volume in the Making a Living Naturally series is divided into four parts. Part 1 contains information on business planning and conducting market research, successfully marketing one's herb business to different types of clients, and managing day-to-day business details. Shores includes profiles of some successful herb-growing businesses. Part 2 covers all aspects of using a greenhouse to grow herbs. Interior greenhouse designs are shown, and everyday operation and maintenance are explained. Part 3 explains the do's and don'ts of starting and growing herbs and controlling insect pests and diseases. Here, too, are data on harvesting, handling, and packaging herbs for sale. Part 4 offers detailed instructions on growing 26 specific herbs. Included are such popular herbs as basil, chives, cilantro, dill, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme. The herbs' botanical names and heights are given, along with information on their uses, varieties, propagation, harvesting, and packaging. The author operated her own herb business in Minnesota for eight years. George Cohen

**From the Back Cover** Learn the secrets of professional herb growers and turn your passion into profits! In this essential handbook for herbal entrepreneurs, you'll find everything you need to know to launch your own business. Whether your goal is to sell fresh-cut herbs at the local farmers' market or supply all the supermarket accounts in a large metropolitan area, Sandie Shores will teach you how to: -- Grow, harvest, and package the most popular herbs and edible flowers -- Construct, operate, and maintain your own greenhouse -- Write a business plan, identify potential markets, and forge business partnerships Shores also profiles professional growers from around North America who share tips and trade secrets for running a successful fresh-cut herb business.