

5

Easy Ways
to Make Money
from your
Herb Garden

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Introducing: Your Very Own Herbal Empire

Don't laugh! Everyone has to start somewhere! Who knows? Your attempts at making money from your passion may indeed catapult you into a realm you never really thought about before.

Recently, a friend and I visited a small herbal shop. It was about the size of a garage . . . no wait . . . it was a converted garage. Yes!

And inside he had dozens upon dozens of dried herbs, herbal preparations, and other related products --- including several brands of vitamins and minerals.

But what struck me all the more, was the flats upon flats of seedlings he had outside the shop. I don't know if these were for sale or if they were his latest "crop" of herbs to dry and sell.

What I do know that this man had found a way to take his passion for herbs and make money from it. Probably, one of the biggest advantages from his point of view. . his commute to work was literally under one minute. The garage was in the back of his home.

I can only imagine how he began his hobby, by starting small, offering perhaps only seedlings or one or two varieties of dried herbs in the beginning.

Then I'm sure as his passion grew . . and people learned of his unique offerings . . and his value-based products . . his business obviously grew to what it is today.

Yes, you too can have your own herbal empire. And no I'm not being sarcastic. Now, perhaps it'll never get as big as the Trump enterprises. Perhaps you don't even want to grow a business that big.

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Perhaps your desire is to use your passion for herbs to earn just a little bit more money to finance . . .er. . . your passion for herbs. Hey, that's great too.

I'm just here to tell you that regardless of whether you want to create a full-time business or are just satisfied selling a few items now and again, you can do it through herbs.

And it really doesn't matter whether you're more interested in medicinal herbs or culinary herbs, let me assure you, there's a growing market for both of them!

Taking the plunge into business.

This report is all about how to take the initial steps. I've provided you with five ways to take one aspect of this hobby and turn it into a potential money-making business.

As you start, you may choose one. Or you may decide that you can market more than one of these avenues at the same time. Whatever you do, keep in mind that you'll be as successful as you believe yourself to be.

Don't be afraid to walk out of your comfort zone (which in your case may be the herb garden itself!). Don't talk yourself out of the trying because you already envision the market is full of this sort of product already.

As a small gardener, growing no doubt organically, you have an advantage right there is this economy. People are searching for organic . . .locally produced products.

Now, go out there and start your herbal empire!

Chapter 1: Selling Seeds

Let's start with the obvious choice. Selling seeds, seedlings and plants! And why not!

This is probably one of the easiest -- and quickest -- ways to start a business from your hobby.

Not sure what herbs to sell? That really shouldn't be a problem. First, consider whether you're selling culinary herbs or medicinal herbs. These two are the most popular categories.

Then put yourself in the customer's shoes. What herbs did you want most when you were first beginning? Basil for culinary reasons? Maybe tarragon because you were interested in creating your own salad dressings?

Or perhaps there was another herb you just couldn't find in your area. If the latter is the case, imagine how someone searching for it would love to stumble upon your small business!

If you're growing medicinal herbs, decide which ones people would be most likely to use -- and buy. Perhaps those that could provide the most uses to their health, and are the easiest to use?

I know many a household that has several aloe vera plants, not because they're herbalists by nature, mind you. No, these individuals grow them in case any member of the family gets burned. They simply cut off a branch of the plant and apply the sap to the burn. Trust me, it works!

How to Market Yourself

At first, it may seem like quite a problem, marketing yourself. But in reality, it's quite easy. You first simply use word of mouth. Tell all of

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your friends and family of your decision. You don't have to ask them to buy any of your plants, just let them know you've started this small adventure. Word will travel from there.

Second, you can always put up flyers in local businesses. Many restaurants as well as grocery stores are happy to do this for local residents. It's a quick and inexpensive way to let people know about your hobby.

You may also want to place a classified ad in your local "shopper" newspaper. You're familiar with those, aren't you? They usually contain only various advertisements. These papers are wildly popular and cost next to nothing to advertise in.

How about taking a day and setting up some plants and seedlings at your local flea market. This is one of the perfect venues. Lots of people walking along. People expecting to spend a couple of dollars on something! Your plants make the perfect spur of the moment purchase.

Don't forget to have some business cards printed up (you can get a starter pack for free on some web sites on the internet; you only pay shipping and handling charges).

Don't be shy about handing them out. Make sure everyone who stops to talk to you at your booth at the flea market receives one.

When to start?

You'll want to start growing the herbs you intend to sell in the late winter of very early spring. Start only with one or two different herbs.

Don't be afraid to micromanage this crop. After all, you want them in perfect health, for two very important reasons. First, you want to give your customers top quality as inexpensively as possible.

And secondly, you want them to come back next season for even more plants -- and other items you have expended to selling by them.

Hey, I'm talking an herbal empire here remember?

Chapter 2: Selling Dried Herbs

Don't discount this route to herbal riches yet! Many people just don't have any inclination at all to actually grow the herbs -- and less desire to dry them for later use.

But if you offer them herbs that have been organically grown from your garden and tenderly dried with care -- now, you've probably actually expanded your customer base quite a bit.

Many individuals would jump at the chance to buy fresh, dried herbs instead of buying the commercially produced ones at the grocery store.

This adds another dimension to your business. You could theoretically have these dried herbs for sale right next to your fresh ones. They could represent a choice to your customers, or inspire a soon-to-be customer to start a hobby of his own.

Again, the perfect start-up venue is a flea market. Lots of traffic.

How to get started

Once you've dried your herbs, keep some out to be sold. You'll want to place these in jars or tins. Just remember though you don't want to place your herbs in clear jars. Herbs exposed to light lose their flavor and potency quickly.

To spur sales, you may want to offer free samples of a food that has been seasoned with your dried herb. Give people a chance to taste how great your product could make their cooking.

Similarly, you could offer samples of some tonic or topical cream that has the herb you're growing in it. Additionally, if you're selling medicinal herbs, why not write up some directions for the best method

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of using it and for what health problem. Think of it as an "owner's manual" for the herb.

If people knew how to use the herbs (and believe it there's plenty of individuals who have neither cooked with a wide variety of herbs or knows much about the healing properties of them) they would be much quicker to buy them.

Anywhere you can sell your fresh herbs, you can also sell your dried variety as well.

Additionally, you may want to consider renting booth space at craft shows. In addition to crafts, many of these shows display products related to people's hobbies.

Marketing yourself.

Here again, word of mouth is the best way to start marketing yourself. Let your friends and neighbors know of your intentions.

But you may also want to post flyers locally as well. Before you know it, people will be coming to you to buy the herbs, you won't have to seek them out.

Chapter 3: Selling herb-related products

That's right! How do you use your herbs? Do you use your lavender and other herbs to create an "aromatherapy bag" that you heat in your microwave and then place on your sore muscles to relieve the pain?

Do you find it helpful and soothing? Do you think others would? You're darn right they would! Why not make a couple of these? How about a small potpourri of herbs to place in your bedroom dresser drawers.

In the marketing world, items like this are called "value-added products." This means that using a single product, like your lavender herb, you can make several other items.

Think of all the ways that you love to use your herbs -- either through culinary uses, as marvelous scents throughout the house or for as some remedy. If you use them in this manner, chances are others will do.

Don't believe me? Check out the stores -- bath and body stores, kitchen stores even health food stores. Herbal based products are a big market.

Heck, a few year back I bought as a gift for a dear friend, a set of coasters. They were cloth coasters which contained a thin layer of herbs. When you placed a hot drink on the coaster it warmed the herbs and made the area smell absolutely delightful. And it still is giving off a magnificent scent to this day.

Start with products you are already using or making for yourself. Sell these first, then expand your line of products. With just a little bit of imagination, you'll be surprised at what you can create.

If you're having any trouble coming up with what you consider are saleable ideas, just ask your family and friends to join in the

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brainstorming with you. No doubt, each of them has at least one herbal-related product they couldn't do without.

Chapter 4: Selling Informational Products

Here's one I bet you hadn't thought of. But this may be one of your best types of products. It certainly is one that lends itself to the global market.

If you're selling herbal-related information, you seriously have to think about setting yourself up a web site and creating some of this information in a digital format -- so your customers can simply download the products from the net to their computer.

But even if you're not completely sold on that marketing approach, you can offer booklets and other information packets where ever you sell your fresh and dried herbs, as well as your "value-added products."

Recipe Book

So what kind of "information" am I talking about. All kinds of things. Let's start off with the obvious, a recipe book featuring herbs you grow. Gather a list of the herbs you've not only grown, but you cook with as well.

Think of all the meals you've made which were kicked up a notch or changed from ordinary to extraordinary because of the herbs you've added. Now begin to write these recipes down. It's that easy. You may want to offer it as an eBook on the web - or you may want to get the book printed inexpensively (even in a booklet format) to take with you to flea markets and craft shows.

You can take your printed material almost anyone to get turned into a small booklet. Start at your local print shop. You'll get the most personalized service there.

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But beyond that is any office supply store. Just about every one of them has an in-house print shop. And as technology gets more advanced, these small departments can do more and more -- for a reasonable amount of money.

Just be sure when you price your item you do so at a reasonable cost, yet one that will bring you a profit, too!

Newsletter

But, you can also start a newsletter. This can be a web based newsletter or a print one. And depending on your level of expertise you may be surprised what you can charge for a monthly or even quarterly newsletter.

If you pack it with little known information and present it in a lively manner, you have yourself one heck of a money maker!

Articles

Do you read herbal magazines? Start writing here! But don't limit yourself, especially if you have a flair for writing. General interest magazines would love articles on herbs.

Health magazines would probably buy an article on how to grow your own herbs to stay healthy.

And don't forget food oriented magazines! Showing food lovers how to grow and enjoy fresh herbs from their own gardens would make a delightful article.

Booklets.

You may also want to write a booklet about the proper way to use medicinal herbs.

Here again, draw from your own experiences. IN addition to how to use the herbs, you may also want to write a booklet on growing medicinal herbs.

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To get ideas, think of this: Anything you didn't know when you began is probably a great topic for the next newcomer to read.

If you still have trouble finding topics, ask your friends and family members to tell you what they know and don't know about herbs. And if they were to buy a booklet, what they would look for.

Chapter 5: Teaching

Yes, you teaching! Why not? You can teach what you do best, grow herbs, preserve and dry them . . . even hold cooking classes teaching people how to use fresh herbs in the cooking.

And think of this, you can teach people about using fresh herbs for medicinal purposes. You can show them the proper way to make herbal tea, when to harvest the leaves for the perfect cup of tea.

How to make a poultice . . . or a tincture . . . even teach them how specific herbs can help heal their health-related problems in their daily lives.

And don't over look the most obvious topic of all, how to grow the herbs. See the possibilities are endless.

Don't worry that you don't think you have any expertise or experience in teaching. You have a passion for herbs. All you need to do is talk about what you do . . . talk about what you love and your students will learn.

Remember back to when you were in school --either high school or college? Who were the best teachers? Those who had an undying love for their subject. That's you!

Where would you teach?

You have the perfect topic to fit in with the "Green Theme" of late. Talk to your local YWCA, or YMCA about holding a class on herb growing, harvesting and preserving. Take advantage of the organic craze.

Even your local health food store might give you space -- or rent you space -- to hold a class. If the idea of actually putting money up front

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for some space worries you, offer to split the profits from the class instead. This way, your host has a vested interest in seeing you succeed.

Any community center may be interested in having you host a class. And don't overlook churches. I know of one church that grows its own organic garden. An organization like this may be open to hosting you. It would help the church to broaden its outreach as well as get more well-known in the area for potential new members.

Growing culinary herbs? Even try your local supermarket. You can not only talk about herbs, but perhaps even make a meal using your herbs and some of the products from their store.

Actually, once you start thinking about it, there probably isn't a place you can't hold a class.

So, go start teaching today!

Conclusion

Your Herbal Empire Awaits

Okay, I agree. It won't feel like an empire starting out. And it isn't. But these five methods:

1. Seeds, seedlings, plants
2. Dried herbs
3. Herb-related products
4. Informational products
5. Teaching

could indeed get you started on a profitable side business. And how far you actually go in that business would be totally up to you.

You can start with one -- and slowly add the others. And it really doesn't matter which project you start with. The beauty of these five is that eventually you can do them simultaneously.

Imagine teaching a class. Afterward, one student may buy your recipe book, another a home-made aromatherapy bag, and another may pick up several packets of dried herbs.

Not only have you made some money from teaching itself, but you've also sold some of your other products.

Keep this in mind when you visit craft shows or the flea market. You may start out thinking that your primary business is selling seedlings, but your customers may also want to buy a book on just what they could do with these seedlings . . . or how to use the herbs once they've grown.

An herbal empire in the making.

The key to making money: Just have fun with it!

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