

How to Divide and Grow Supermarket Basil

By Tanya



Keep pots of basil alive by planting the strongest plants into their own pots. Grow supermarket basil this way and you'll have dozens of plants that will thrive all year long.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret. The pots of herbs that you find at the supermarket are designed to die. It wasn't your over or under watering that did it! Basil, coriander, and even the thyme isn't meant to last more than a few weeks. It's because each pot is seeded with dozens of plants rather than just one. There's no space in that tiny pot for dozens of plants to live so they run out of nutrients and die. Feeling vindicated?

There's also another secret that I want to share with you. It's easy to beat the system and keep supermarket basil alive. All you need to do is separate out the strongest plants, pot them on individually, and grow them on. I'm going to show you how.



Pots of supermarket basil contain dozens of plants that need to be separated out

Can you actually grow supermarket basil?

Live herbs purchased from the supermarket are grown in very controlled conditions. They're monitored from seed to shopping trolley to ensure optimum growth. Basically, they're used to the good life but are grown in such dense plantings that the compost can't sustain life for long.

It's not too late to save your basil though. If you separate out the best plants and grow them on you'll have fresh basil all throughout the growing months. I've grown my basil this way for years and even some of the saddest looking plants rebound. [14:24](#)



Easy Basil Propagation

how to divide supermarket basil



How to Split Supermarket Basil into Individual Plants

- *Materials needed:*
- 1 pot of Basil purchased from the supermarket
- Rich potting compost – multipurpose will work
- Small individual pots – toilet paper rolls are perfect
- A warm window sill, greenhouse, or conservatory

Step 1: Rip the Basil in Two

Take the Basil out of the pot and gently pull the compost/root-ball into two pieces. I say gently but in reality, you're going to have to rip through some roots. Using a slow but firm action in this step helps minimize damage. Also try your hardest to not damage the stems of your plants. When you're separating the plants try to handle the compost and roots and not the plants themselves.

Step 2: Plant up the Healthiest

Take up one half and have a look at the cross-section of plants. You'll see that some plants are bigger and stronger than others and these are the ones that you want to target. Gently pull and tease these larger plants out and use the smaller ones for your next meal. Take each decent basil plant and tuck it up into its own pot. Make sure that it's not planted any deeper in the compost than it was in the original pot.



They look a bit sad, don't they? Don't worry, they'll perk up

Step 3: Pinch out the Growing Tips

Once all of your plants are potted up, pinch out the growing tips. This means to remove the top of the plant down to just above the last leaf node. That's a place on the stem where leaves are growing from. This exercise is meant to remove all but a few leaves

from the plant. Removing them will make the plant focus energy on developing a good root system.

The best part of this step is that you can use all of those growing tips to make a nice pesto that very day. It also encourages a stronger and bushier plant.



What the plants look like 20 days after potting them up

Step 4: Water your plants well

Now place the plants in a warm conservatory, window sill, or greenhouse and keep them well watered. Basil doesn't like the cold or too dry so make sure to keep them cozy. Recovery time took 20 days from the day I potted them up to the day I started hardening them off.

'Hardening off' involves setting the plants outside in the day and then taking them back indoors at night. After a week of this, your plants should be accustomed to the outside temperature. This is an important step before planting them outside.

That's pretty much it as far as growing on the plants on to this stage. Just keep your plants keep it in full sun with moist roots. The more you pick those growing tips the more

the plant will produce. Just one of these supermarket plants should keep you in basil for the rest of the summer. Not bad for a £1.25 investment. Watch the video below to see how it's done. The volume is a little low on this video so turn up your dial to hear what's going on.

Comments

Use this method for supermarket parsley, basil, mint, and thyme though.

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