Step 1: Choose any area that either gets natural sunlight or can be fitted with artificial light. The area really doesn't have to be very large because the herb plants are relatively small.

Step 2: Purchase metal or firm plastic containers that fit into the area you've chosen. The container needs to adequately fill the area that you have chosen and needs to be about 6" to 8" deep to accommodate the amount of soil necessary for planting the herbs.

NOTE: Don't be afraid to experiment with area and different types of containers. You can set up some tiers of planks in front of a window by attaching some common, but sturdy, braces to the top of the window frame. Then run a wooden dowel across the braces and then suspend the half-inch planks in two or three rows. You can place the containers along the planks.

Step 3: Fill your container or containers with a mixture of good potting soil and humus. If the container you are using is fairly large, you might want to partition it into two or three sections. Sectioning a container will allow you to vary the watering of the plants and provide more room to manipulate the plants if necessary.

Step 4: Think about the plants that you want to grow. If you are a neophyte, begin with the basics: flat-leaf and curly parsley, pineapple and tri-colored sage, common and Tuscan blue rosemary, and common and broadleaf thyme. You can also buy a variety of plants and see how well they grow. As some plants flourish, you may want to put them together in a partitioned area and keep the others in their small pots. You can also surf the Internet for different recipes or types of cuisine that use a variety of herbs.

Step 5: Order your plants from The Garden Company. We offer a wide variety of herbs and with each order we include the most up-to-date information about the herbs you are ordering and how to care for them. If you decide to buy plants at a nursery, make sure you check all the plants before purchasing them to make sure they are healthy and free from insects. Also purchase name stakes and a permanent marker.

NOTE: If you want to start your plants from seeds, you can order the seeds from The Garden Company as well. Starting from seeds is a little longer process. You will need to germinate the seeds. An easy way to start the seeds is to place them on a moist paper towel in a plastic container. When the seeds begin to sprout, carefully transfer the seedlings to your container(s).

Step 6: Plan and organize the layout of your garden. Write down the names of the plants, their expected height, and the recipes you want to use them in. Also write the name of each plant on a name stake. You may also want to keep a record of where you are planting each herb in case you can make adjustments at a later time.

Step 7: Check the soil for dampness. Water the plants whenever the soil becomes dry to the touch. Do not over water your plants. In general, you will not need to fertilize your herb plants. Fertilizer stakes can be helpful, especially if you have more than a dozen plants in one location.

Step 8: Make small holes in the bottom of the container(s) to allow the roots to grow freely. Make sure you press the soil firmly (but gently) around the roots of the plants.

Step 9: Adjust the growing lights if you are using them.