

## 7 “Brain Health” Herbs in Your Garden

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As we joyfully welcome spring after a long winter, we look forward to planting gardens. This year, I’m going to plant more herbs. Research on the health and lifestyle of our most fragile organ, the brain, gives hope that the key to Alzheimer’s may exist in *something* we can control. I have started reading *Grain Brain* by Dr. David Perlmutter, and the companion cookbook. This book has helped me in planning my herb garden to support brain health.

Many herbs promote brain health through their anti-inflammatory properties and antioxidant rich vitamins. *Grain Brain* promotes protein, healthy fats and vegetables, while severely limited fruits for a brain-health diet plan. It states that the antioxidants are mythical in protecting the brain. I bring this up to point out that we still have no answers. We have theories; some very well researched, and just like a decade ago, when everyone thought Gingko was the answer, more research is needed until we can find a cure for cognitive impairments. That said a healthy lifestyle minimizes risk. I’m planting the following:

**Sage** – general short term memory booster

**Basil** – anti-inflammatory properties to improve blood flow in the brain

**Cilantro** – anti-inflammatory and helps reduce bad and improve good cholesterol

**Tarragon** – anti-rheumatic, helping remove toxins and promote blood flow

**Mint** – improves memory retention, alertness, depression, a natural stimulant

**Thyme** – improves DHA levels in the brain (an essential fatty acid)

**Rosemary** – improves overall cognitive performance in studies

None of this is meant as medical advice, and you should always check with your medical professionals before adding supplements. I encourage you to learn about simple ways to make small changes that support brain health. As you FACE YOUR FEAR about dementia risk, know you aren’t alone and there may be many things we can do to minimize the risk – if we start today!

### **BRAIN HEALTHY SALAD**

*(Grain Brain, Perlmutter, p. 271)*

Salad:

4 C mixed baby greens  
1 C fresh Italian parsley  
½ C chopped chives  
½ C mixed fresh herbs (mustard cress, cilantro, tarragon, etc.)  
½ C chopped raw nuts

Dressing:

¼ C balsamic vinegar  
2-3 cloves chopped garlic  
½ shallot chopped  
1 T Dijon mustard  
1 T rosemary (fresh or dried)  
juice of 1 lemon  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp pepper  
½ C olive oil