

green it yourself



solar herb dryer

The average American meal is comprised of ingredients that have traveled at least 1,500 miles to get to our kitchens. So why not grow a few things at home to cut down on your food's carbon footprint?

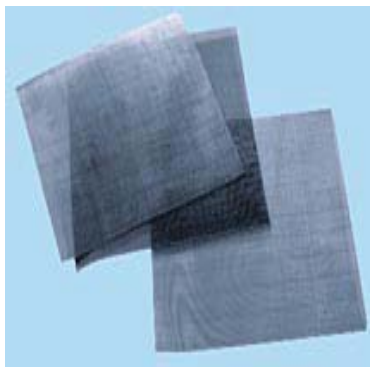
Herbs are easy to grow at home and add so much fantastic flavor to a meal. Many are also natural pest deterrents that help maintain and even improve the health of your garden. But sometimes their robust nature leaves you with a bounty of herbs beyond what you could possibly need at one time. Drying herbs is the perfect solution because it keeps your surplus from going to waste and lets you enjoy your home-grown herbs all year round.

We'll show you how to build a stylish and compact solar herb dryer from materials you may have lying around your home: an old picture frame, a few corks, and some screen, which, if you don't have lying around the house, you can easily buy at an art or hardware store. This dryer works just as well indoors as out, so a little rain will never stand in the way of your drying efforts. When you're hanging or flat-drying your herbs you can also feel good about the fact that you're taking advantage of one of our planet's greatest renewable energy sources: the Sun!

## collect materials



frame



wire mesh



herbs



eye screws



suction hooks



4 corks





## getting started



Take an old picture frame that you don't mind putting permanently out of commission and remove everything from it (glass, backing, etc.) until you're left with just the frame. An old wooden frame will work beautifully for this project.

1

2



## take measurements, cut mesh



Measure the opening of your frame. Then cut two pieces of screen, one to fit into the opening and one slightly larger (if you're using screen mesh from an old window or door screen then first wash it really well). You'll use the two pieces of screen to sandwich your herbs between whenever you hang your dryer up in a window.

3



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let the green in 



## fasten screens into frame, attach corks and hooks



Attach the lower screen to the back of the frame by simply gluing the edges down. The second screen, however, must be removable, so if your frame already has built-in metal clips – great! You can use these for fastening the screen into the frame. If not, twist in some eye screws parallel to and just above the lower screen. The number of screws will vary based on the size of your frame. Turn screws eye-up in order to slip the upper screen in and out. Turn sideways to secure the screen once herbs are in place.

1



On the back of your herb dryer, glue a cork to each corner so that when you flip it over it forms a little table. This will allow the necessary air to circulate freely above and below flat-dried herbs. The cork feet create just the lift you need to let air in underneath the drier for proper drying. The corks will also help protect your window if you hang your dryer.

2



To prepare the dryer for hanging, you will need two more eye screws and two suction cups with hooks attached. Screw the eye screws into one side of your frame like you would if you were going to hang it on a wall.

Now stick your suction cups onto a window, spaced at the same interval as the two eye screws. Then just place some herbs in your dryer and hang it up in the sun.

3





## two ways to dry your delicious herbs:



hanging herb drying



table top herb drying

