

Indoor Hydroponic Herb Growing Quick-Start Guide

The companion to the ZoxDeal honest review of the 12-Pod Hydroponic Herb Garden Kit: set it up in 20 minutes, program the light timer with confidence, and grow herbs that thrive.

A free bonus from **ZoxDeal** (zoxdeal.com) for readers of the 12-Pod Hydroponic Herb Garden Kit review. This guide is original ZoxDeal content, written from the product's published specifications and verified buyer feedback. It is not affiliated with the manufacturer.

1. Before You Start — Buy These First

The kit ships with the unit, 12 grow pods, the water pump, the 20W LED panel with adjustable pole, A+B nutrient bottles, and a manual. It does **NOT** include seeds or seed trays — the most common buyer disappointment. Order these with the kit so day one is day one:

- **Herb seeds** — basil, parsley, mint, cilantro, thyme, or chives. For your first run, pick fast, forgiving herbs: basil and mint germinate reliably.
- **Grow sponges or seed-starting pods** sized for net pots (check the pod diameter before ordering — one buyer found it hard to source trays that fit).
- **A pH test kit or strips** (optional but helpful; herbs prefer roughly pH 5.5–6.5).
- **Distilled or filtered water** if your tap water is very hard — mineral buildup is the #1 pump-clog cause.

Note: Standard seed-starting trays from a garden store work, but measure first: the pods on this unit are sized for its own baskets, and generic trays may not drop in cleanly.

2. Setup in 8 Steps (about 20 minutes)

Step 1. Pick the spot. A kitchen counter near an outlet works best. The unit is about 50 cm wide — measure your counter first. Keep it where a little splashing won't hurt.

Step 2. Fill the tank. Add up to 4 L of water (use the water-level window on the front: 4L MAX / 3.1L / 2.2L / 1.3L marks). One verified buyer confirms 4 L is just right for a full cycle.

Step 3. Mix the nutrients. Add the A+B nutrient solution per the manual's ratio. Stir gently. Under-dosing starves plants; over-dosing burns roots — follow the label exactly on the first fill.

Step 4. Seat the pump. Place the pump in the tank, fully submerged, with the intake filter attached. It circulates the nutrient mix — whisper-quiet when working properly.

Step 5. Place the grow baskets and pods. Drop a grow sponge with 2–3 seeds into each basket, then seat all 12 baskets in the deck.

Step 6. Raise the light panel. Slide the LED panel up the pole so it sits 5–10 cm above the pods. Raise it as plants grow — tall herbs touching the light get scorched tips.

Step 7. Plug in (US adapter included). The adapter accepts 110–240V, so it works on standard US outlets. CE certified.

Step 8. Set the timer (below) and walk away. Check after 24 hours: water flowing, light cycling, no leaks.

3. The Light Timer — Which Mode to Pick

The panel offers an ON/OFF mode plus three timed day/night cycles. Match the cycle to what you're growing:

Mode	Light / dark	Best for
12 / 12 h	12 hours on, 12 off	Herbs and leafy greens (the safe default)
14 / 10 h	14 hours on, 10 off	Faster vegetative growth; seedlings
16 / 8 h	16 hours on, 8 off	Maximum growth push; short winter days

ON / OFF	Manual	Testing, or supplementing a sunny windowsill
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Start with **12/12** for basil, parsley, and mint. The LED has two spectrum settings: **Blue Light** (promotes chlorophyll, stronger plants) and **Sunlike Light** (enhances photosynthesis) — Unlike is the everyday choice; Blue helps stocky seedlings.

4. Water & Nutrient Schedule

- **Top up water** when the level window drops near 1.3 L — don't let the pump run dry.
- **Full water change every 2 weeks.** Drain, rinse the tank, refill with fresh water + fresh nutrients. Stale solution grows algae and throws off pH.
- **Re-dose nutrients** after every full change, not after top-ups (topping up with plain water keeps concentration right).
- **Watch the roots.** Healthy roots are white. Brown, slimy roots mean light is leaking into the tank or the solution is old — change it and check that baskets seat fully.

5. What Grows Best in 12 Pods

The 12-pod layout suits **compact herbs**: basil, parsley, cilantro, mint, thyme, chives, dill. One detailed buyer measured ~16,000 lux at 10 cm under the panel — plenty for herbs — but warned the pod spacing is **tight for big leafy greens like full-size lettuce**; those crowd each other and underperform. If you want lettuce, plant every other pod (6 plants) instead of all 12.

Stagger your planting: sow 4 pods this week, 4 next week, 4 the week after. You'll harvest continuously instead of drowning in basil all at once.

6. Troubleshooting — Fix It in Minutes

Light turns on but water doesn't circulate. Check the water level first — the pump must be fully submerged. Then pull the pump and rinse its intake filter; a clogged filter is the most common cause (this matches a real 3-star buyer report). Re-seat and re-run.

LED panel dead on arrival. One buyer reported this. Test the outlet and the adapter first; if the panel truly doesn't light, contact the seller immediately — you have free returns within 90 days, and a DOA unit is a clear-cut claim.

Slow or no germination. Most common causes: old seeds, pods too wet (seeds rot), or the light too far away. Keep sponges damp, not soaked; keep the panel 5–10 cm above the pods; give basil 5–10 days.

Algae (green slime) in the tank. Light is reaching the nutrient solution. Make sure every basket is seated, cover unused pods, and do a full water change. Keep the unit out of direct blazing sun — the LED is the light source.

White crust on pods / rust on accessories. Mineral deposits from hard water. Wipe with a vinegar-damp cloth. One buyer saw rust on a separately purchased metal accessory — stick to the included plastic parts where possible.

Leggy, stretched seedlings. The light is too high or the cycle too short. Lower the panel and switch to 14/10 or 16/8 until stems thicken.

7. Cleaning Between Crops

- Drain the tank completely and wipe it with a soft cloth — no harsh chemicals.
- Rinse the pump and its filter under running water; clear any root hairs from the intake.
- Soak baskets and the deck in warm water with a splash of white vinegar for 15 minutes, then rinse.
- Wipe the LED panel with a dry cloth only. Never spray cleaner on it.

Note: A 10-minute clean between crops prevents 90% of the problems in section 6. Old nutrient film is where algae and odors start.

Happy growing! — **ZoxDeal**, zoxdeal.com