

Did You Know?



Coriander / Cilantro *Coriandrum sativum*

- Coriander and cilantro are the same plant. The seeds from this plant are referred to as coriander and the leaves are referred to as cilantro or Chinese parsley.
- Coriander sativum is native to the eastern Mediterranean region.
- Both the seeds and leaves have had culinary uses since medieval times. All parts of the plant are edible.
- The name comes from the Greek word koris, meaning bedbug since the unripe coriander fruit has a disagreeable “buggy” smell.
- Coriander seeds have a pleasant, spicy aroma when mature and dry and a flavor that is described as citrusy, nutty and spicy when crushed.
- Coriander is used in cuisines world-wide, including in spice blends like curry powder, garam masala and berbere.
- Coriander seeds are referred to as one of the bitter herbs in the Bible and eaten at the first Passover. In addition, manna was described as being the color of coriander seeds.
- Healing properties were associated with coriander in early Roman and Chinese medicine and research continues today.
- During World War II, the seeds were coated in white or pink sugar and thrown from carnival wagons. These confections or confetti were eventually replaced by balls of colored paper and is how confetti got its name.
- Coriander seed is used in the making of gin as well as many other distilled spirits and herbal liqueurs.
- The seeds may be used whole, crushed or ground in cooking.
- Cilantro is popular in Mexican, Asian and Indian dishes.

- The leaves and tender stems of cilantro are used in curries, sauces, salsas, soups and salads. Cooking deepens the characteristic sharp flavor.
- To harvest the leaves, cut stems near the ground level, about one-third of the plant at a time.
- To harvest the seeds, let them ripen on the plants. Clip the brown, round seed heads and place inside a paper bag. The seed heads will dry and open, allowing the edible seed to fall out.
- Some people may be genetically predisposed to dislike cilantro, according to studies by Charles J. Wysocki of the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia. Or it could be that one's positive or negative experiences with the flavor of the herb, influenced by cultural exposure, plays a role in whether one likes the flavor or not.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/14/dining/14curious.html?_r=0

Growing Tips

- Cilantro grows best in the cooler temperatures of the spring and fall. Or through the winter in zones 8 – 10. As temperatures heat up, the plant sends up a flower stalk and sets seed. (This process is called bolting.)
- Grow in full sun and well-drained soil except in the South and South west where some shade is well tolerated.
- Manage cilantro's naturally fast life cycle by sowing seeds successively over a few weeks and by planting varieties that are slow to bolt such as 'Slow Bolt', 'Leisure', 'Longstanding' and 'Santo'.
- Rather than transplanting seedlings, directly sow seeds in the garden or a container. Grow plants 6-8" apart.
- Let one or two plants go to seed to ensure that seedlings will emerge when the temperatures cool again. It is possible to have both a spring and a fall crop in many climates.