

Latin Name/Genus: *Coriandrum sativum*

Family: *Apiaceae*

Difficulty: Easy

Season: Cool season

Exposure: Full-sun to part-shade

Zone: Hardy to Zone 5 (will overwinter with protection to Zone 7)



Timing: Direct sow coriander seeds from shortly after the last frost date to late spring, or direct sow in the fall under cover for a winter crop. Optimal soil temperature for germination: 15°C; seeds should sprout in 5-10 days.

Starting: Sow seeds 2cm (1") deep in short rows; thin seedlings to stand 5-10cm (2-4") apart if harvesting leaves. If growing to harvest seed, allow 23cm (9") between plants.

Growing: Coriander, also know as Cilantro, does best in light, well-drained soil in partial shade, in relatively dry conditions - this is easy to achieve beneath a cloche in winter, where cilantro will thrive. Once it blooms, the seeds ripen suddenly, in only a couple of days, so care should be taken to prevent self sowing or simply losing those useful seeds. Coriander can be tricky because several factors can cause it to bolt - avoid transplanting for this reason, and avoid hot conditions as well as too much moisture.

Nutrient Preferences: Coriander appreciates natural fertilizers with a higher nitrogen content applied sparingly no more than a couple times throughout the growing season.

Harvest: Pick young coriander leaves once they have reached about 10cm (4") in height - try freezing them in ice cube trays with water (the stems and roots are also full of flavour). The flavour, though intense when fresh, diminishes quickly when dried or cooked, so always add coriander just before serving. Harvest coriander seeds by sticking 6 - 8 seed heads in a paper bag, hanging the paper bag up somewhere airy, away from direct sunlight, allowing the bag to catch the seeds as they ripen and fall out.

Companion Planting: Coriander plants love neighbouring next to asparagus, eggplant, peppers, potatoes, and especially tomatoes (providing shade for these herbs). They are a terrific garden companion in general, as they repels aphids, potato beetles, and spider mites while attracting hoverflies and other beneficial predatory insects.