

Easy Gardening

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Cilantro is in the same family as parsley and is originally from Greece. Both its fresh green leaves and its seeds are used in many dishes, from Mexican food to Thai food.

Cilantro leaves are used fresh in salads, salsa, and meat dishes, and can add a little zest to an omelet. The seeds, which are referred to as coriander, have a distinct flavor similar to orange and are used in pastries, sausage, and cooked fruit, and as an important ingredient in pickling spice and curry powder. Coriander oil is purported to have a medicinal quality and reduce flatulence.

Varieties

- Long Standing
- Slo Bolt
- Leisure

Soil preparation

Cilantro prefers a light, well-drained, moderately fertile loam or sandy soil, but it

will tolerate many soils as long as nutrient levels and moisture are monitored.

Planting

Cilantro is a cool-season crop that does best at temperatures between 50 and 85 degrees F. It can tolerate temperatures as low as 10 degrees F, but if temperatures exceed 85 degrees F it will start to bolt. In Texas, the best time to plant cilantro is in February for an April harvest and again in September for a November harvest. Weekly plantings will ensure that you have a continuous crop.

To establish cilantro from seeds, set the seeds in a soft, well-tilled, and composted soil in January or February for a spring crop or in September for a fall crop. Set the seeds 2 inches apart in rows 12 to 15 inches apart if you are planning to harvest cilantro leaves. If you plan to harvest the seeds, plant the seeds 8 inches apart in rows 15 inches apart.

For both uses, the seed depth should be about ¼ to ½ inches. There are about 2,000 seeds per ounce, so home gardeners will not

need to purchase a lot of seeds for each season.



Figure 1. The seeds of the cilantro plant are known as coriander.


Fertilizing

Cilantro should be fertilized twice. Apply ½ teaspoon of ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) or urea (21-0-0) per square foot.




Watering

The plant's most critical need for water occurs during seedling germination and establishment. After the plants become established, they do not need much water.

Disease

Name and description		Control
 <p><small>Leaf Spot (Xanthomonas sp.) on cilantro. Courtesy Tom Isabelli, TADE, Weslaco, 1996.</small></p>	<p>Bacterial leaf spot (<i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>coriandricola</i>)</p>	<p>neem oil</p>

Insects

Name		Control
	<p>Beet armyworm (<i>Spodoptera exigua</i>)</p>	<p>Bt Sevin® pyrethrin</p>
	<p>Cabbage looper (<i>Trichoplusia ni</i>)</p>	<p>neem oil Bt spinosad</p>
	<p>Green peach aphid (<i>Myzus persicae</i>)</p>	<p>neem oil pyrethrin azadirachtin</p>

Weeds

	Control
Preplant	Corn gluten meal
Postemergence	20% vinegar cinnamon and clove oil d-limonene

Harvesting

Cilantro leaves are ready to harvest 45 to 70 days after seeding. Cut exterior leaves once they reach 4 to 6 inches long. Or, cut the whole plant about 1 to 2 inches above the soil level to use both small and large leaves.

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