

## How to Grow Cilantro

### General

Cilantro is challenging to grow in some gardens. The big leaves that we see in stores are harvested from tiny plants. The secret is to give cilantro deep soil for the roots, try placing the plant in shade, pick frequently and resow.

### Latin

*Coriandrum sativum*

Family: Apiaceae

### Difficulty

Easy

### Season & Zone

**Season:** Cool season

**Exposure:** Sun or part-shade

**Zone:** 2-12. Will overwinter with protection in Zone 7

### Timing

Direct sow from April 1st to the end of August. Direct sow in September under cover for a winter crop. Optimal soil temperature for germination: 15°C (60°F). Seeds should sprout in 5-10 days.

### Starting

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

### Growing

Cilantro is tricky because several factors can cause it to bolt. Avoid transplanting for this reason, and avoid hot conditions as well as too much moisture. It 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.

### Harvest

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

### Seed Info

Usual seed life: 3 years.

### Companion Planting

Cilantro repels aphids, potato beetles, and spider mites.



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