

## How to Grow Leeks

### General

Leeks are a valuable addition to the garden because they can be used instead of pungent storage onions from October until April. Even in heavy soils, leeks are easy to grow and have lots of flavour.

### Latin

*Allium ampeloprasum* var. *porrum*

Family: Amaryllidaceae

### Difficulty

Easy, but slow. Transplanting required.

### Season & Zone

**Season:** Cool season

**Exposure:** Full-sun

**Zone:** Overwintering leeks are hardy to Zone 7.

### Timing

Start summer/fall harvest leeks in February/March in flats indoors. Start winter harvest leeks from March to mid-June in a humus-rich nursery bed outside, and then transplant. Optimal soil temperature: 10-25°C (50-75°F). Seeds should sprout in 10-16 days.

### Starting

In flats: Sow seeds 5mm (¼") deep, about 1cm (½") apart. Transplant when 20cm (8") tall. Space 15-20cm (6-8") apart in rows 45cm (18") apart.

### Growing

Ideal pH: 5.-6.5. Leeks like fertile soil with lots of compost and ½ cup complete organic fertilizer worked in beneath each 2m (6') of row. Use a dibber to make holes 15cm (6") deep. Set transplants at the bottom of the hole and cover with soil up to the first leaf. Leave the rest of the hole unfilled - rain will fill it in as the leek grows. To blanch further up the stem, hill soil up around the stem as the leek grows, or mulch with straw. Dates of maturity are from transplant date.

### Harvest

Dig anytime the leeks are 2cm (1") in diameter or larger.

### Companion Planting

Grow leeks with beets, carrot, celery, onions, and spinach. Avoid planting near beans and peas. Leeks help repel carrot rust flies.

