

# GROWING CORIANDER

*A zesty herb, typically used in South Asian and South American cuisine, imparts a burst of a lemon, peppery, pungent flavours to curries, rice dishes, salsa verde and as a garnish for soups. Every part of the herb including soft, light stems and leaves can be used. The flowers grow in pretty umbels, are bee friendly and if left to seed, can be used in cooking adding both flavour and texture when used fresh or dried.*

## Seed Sowing

Coriander seeds are best sown direct, outdoors from May in shallow rows, 20 cm apart, and later thinned to around 7 cm apart. For an early crop, seeds can be sown indoors from March. Also good as an autumn/winter crop sown in September. Germination time is 7-21 days.

## Transplanting

Prepare the area by removing weeds and adding organic matter before planting. Transplant your seedlings into their final growing position in rows 20 cm apart and plants 7 cm apart from May onwards.

## Plant Care

Bolting can be a problem in the height of summer. Long day length and hot, dry weather will push coriander to go to seed. Ensure the ground has enough organic matter to retain moisture and keep it well watered. You can also make successive sowings to replace any bolted plants or just let them flower for the bees and enjoy the seeds later in the year.

## Challenges

Slugs and snails really like young plants. If these are a problem in your garden, sow indoors and plant out when larger. Encourage slug predators like ground beetles, lizards, slow worms, and, if you're lucky enough, hedgehogs into your garden by creating wildlife habitat.

## Harvest

Harvest once established and leaves are plentiful. Leave around 8 central leaves to keep growing on and keep picking regularly to discourage bolting. Successive sowings will lengthen the harvest time, as coriander is a short-lived herb and is best enjoyed young.

## Culinary Ideas

Coriander is a fragrant fresh herb, high in vitamin A and C. It's best added at the end of cooking to retain its flavour and colour; all parts can be used, especially the tasty seeds.

Verdita is a Mexican drink usually served as a shot with tequila. Blend coriander and mint leaves, add lime and pineapple juice, then strain. Serve as a shot or lengthen with soda or lemonade.

## Seed Saving

To save coriander seeds, choose healthy coriander plants that have been sown early in the season. Space them a little further apart to give them the room to grow. Coriander is partially self-fertile but does benefit from other coriander plants around and insects to set good viable seeds. Let them flower and go to seed. Once they start to turn brown, you can harvest. They can fall off quite easily, so get them before they drop. Snip the seed heads off or rub the seeds into a container. Leave them to dry out and keep them in a cool, dark place.