

GROWING PARSLEY

Parsley is a hardy biennial and is easy to grow. It's a must for any herb garden, with its small size meaning it can be easily squeezed into unused corners of the garden. The seeds can take a while to germinate, according to British folklore it journeys to the devil and back seven times before sprouting!

Seed Sowing

Sow your Parsley seeds from February to June. They are ideal for direct sowing from April onwards, but you can also sow them indoors in modules from February and plant out later if that suits you. Sow 4-5 seeds 0.5 cm deep; keep them well watered as they are slow to germinate and can take 3+ weeks.

Transplanting

Transplant parsley into a weed-free bed either in full sun or partial shade. They should be spaced in rows 20 cm apart with an in-row spacing of 15 cm. Water well after planting.

Plant Care

Parsley is very easy to care for; keep it weed-free, remove any yellowing leaves regularly, and water during hot spells.

Challenges

Parsley is related to carrots and celery, so some of the same pests can affect them. Celery Leaf miners eat between the layers in the leaf and should be removed as soon as spotted. Carrot root flies are another pest and can lay eggs on young plants; the grubs eat their way down into the roots, and the plant will start to grow yellow then brown before dying off. Using insect mesh can prevent attacks.

Harvest

Keep picking the larger outer leaves to encourage new growth. You can remove any flower spikes in year 2 to prolong leaf production while you are waiting for your current year's parsley to mature, but it will eventually go to seed.

Culinary Ideas

Parsley is an extremely versatile culinary herb. It can be added while cooking and/or used as a garnish, packed with antioxidants, vitamins K, A, and C, as well as iron. It also freshens the breath and cleanses the palate. Some great recipes are Lebanese tabbouleh, chimichurri, herby potato salad, gremolata, and garlic bread.

Seed Saving

Leave at least five plants to flower and go to seed. Once the seed heads turn brown, you can cut them and dry them for two more weeks before rubbing off the seeds and storing in a cool, dry place. The seeds do not last much longer than two years; fresh seed is best.