

GROWING CLAYTONIA

A must-have excellent winter leaf of mild flavour and incredibly succulent, soft and juicy texture. Winter purslane, also known as miners lettuce or claytonia, has heart-shaped elegant looking leaves which are small, abundant and make a great cut-and-come-again salad green. You will get a productive harvest all winter and early spring and if left to self seed, it will just keep coming back year after year.

Seed Sowing

Sow between August - September for winter and early spring harvests. Sow seeds in well-watered seed drills or broadcast sparsely, keeping moist to aid germination. Seeds can also be module sown, planting out after 3-4 weeks. Claytonia prefers temperatures below 12 degrees to germinate well.

Transplanting

Thin direct sown plants to 10cm apart. Plant out from modules once seedlings are established, spacing plants 10cm apart. Claytonia tolerates mild frosts but is better grown under cover for harvests all winter..

Plant Care

Keep the area weed-free and consistently watered. You can mulch around the plants to keep in moisture and prevent weeds.

Challenges

Generally pest and disease-free, young leaves of Claytonia are a favourite of slugs and snails. Keep grass around veg beds short and remove any potential slug habitats like sandbags or wood.

Harvest

You can either cut the whole plant at the base once a large head has formed or pick a few of the outer leaves from each plant to encourage regrowth.

Culinary Ideas And Uses

Claytonia is high in Vitamin C and was thought to be used by miner's to ward off scurvy in the gold rush. It can be cooked like spinach but we prefer it raw as part of a winter salad.

Seed Saving

Choose plants that are true to type, healthy and have shown pest resistance. Avoid early bolters.

Watch the plants carefully once they've started to flower as seeds will form and drop before the plant begins to fade. Pull up entire plants and hang them to dry over a pillowcase to collect the seeds.

Alternatively dig up flowering plants to where you wish the seeds to be sown and allow them to drop seeds naturally.

Store in a cool dark place; seeds should remain viable for around 5 years.