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KNOW YOUR VEG

Discover leeks

Here's the chance for you to discover some of the basic facts about Leeks as well as some essential growing tips. Use these to decide whether you want to grow the vegetable, whether you are able to and what you need to do or look out for in order to grow a bountiful crop!



Other names: Allium Porrum

Appearance: Long cylinder shaped stem of rolled leaves

Popular varieties: Carlton AGM, Apollo AGM, Toledo AGM & Pancho AGM

Interesting fact: The leek is one of the national emblems of Wales, whose citizens wear it on St. David's Day. It's been used to represent Wales on the back of £1 coins.

Nutritional value: Full of vitamins (B & C) and minerals

When to grow: Seed in a tray in mid-late winter before putting into the ground in mid-spring; or sow straight into the ground in early-mid-spring

Likes: Sunny site in any soil that is heavy, moisture retentive but won't waterlog in the winter; being planted deep for long stems and having earth piled around the stem; a good soaking of water every 10 days with regular weeding whilst growing.

Dislikes: Lack of water or over-watering

Harvest time: Autumn after planting out in spring

Watch out for: Leek rust – orange pustules that occur in damp weather; throw away or burn affected leaves once harvested

Cooking tips: Raw or cooked; baby leeks in salads or use in soups; casseroles and other dishes

Essential Growing Tips for leeks



- Leeks are easy to grow and need little attention when they are in their final growing spot. They can look very pretty grown among marigolds.
- Leeks like rich, well drained soil which has been well fed with manure. Be sure to dig the ground really well before planting. The soil needs to be very loose.
- Plants must be planted deeply to allow the long white stem to develop. Leeks like being in a sunny spot.
- Sowing inside in early winter and then replanting them outside will give an early crop.
- Most crops come from sowing seeds during spring. Seed should be sown thinly 1cm deep in rows.
- Around mid-summer, when the plants are about 20-23cm (8"-9") tall move the plants into their permanent homes. Water well before digging up the young plants.
- When replanting - make a series of holes 15 cm deep and 15 cm apart. Put a leek into each hole and fill it with water. This will allow earth to wash over the roots. Firm down.
- Leave the leeks to grow throughout the summer. Water only when necessary. Feed regularly. Pull up earth around the stem but do not allow it to fall between the leaves. This will increase the size of the white stem.
- The plants can be harvested from mid-autumn. If heavy frosts are expected, dig up a supply of leeks. If you try and dig them up when the earth is frozen, the stem can snap leaving the white stem in the earth. Store in a cool place.
- Do not grow Leeks in the same place two years running. This will prevent a build up of diseases in the soil.

**For further information call 0845 402 5300, or visit
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