

Cilantro

Cilantro, a cool-season herb, thrives in full sun and well-drained soil. A staple for Mexican cuisine, cilantro lends a peppery flavor to any dish. Cilantro can be used fresh, dried or frozen in ice cube trays topped with water for use later in cooked dishes.

Detailed Guide:

- **Soil:** Cilantro prefers a slightly acidic soil pH (6.2 to 6.8).
- **Improve Soil:** Incorporate organic matter like compost to improve drainage and nutrient content.
- **Watering:** Keep the soil moist but not soggy.
- **Mulching:** Mulch around seedlings to help retain moisture and control weeds.
- **Fertilizing:** Use a water-soluble plant food to encourage leaf production.
- **Sunlight:** Cilantro needs about 6-8 hours of sunlight per day.
- **Hot Climates:** Provide afternoon (2-6pm) shade to prevent bolting in our growing zone (6B).

Harvesting:

- **Leaves:** Harvest cilantro leaves when they are about 6 inches long.
- **Seeds:** For coriander seeds, wait until the plant has flowered and the seed heads turn brown.

Common Issues and Solutions:

- **Bolting (premature seed production):** Avoid over-fertilization and provide shade during hot weather to prevent bolting.
- **Root Rot:** Avoid overwatering, which can lead to root rot.
- **Pests:** While cilantro is generally pest-resistant, monitor for aphids or other pests and take appropriate action.