DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Agriculture and Natural Resources

FSA6091

Home Gardening Series

Parsley

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Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny or partial shade
Soil – well-drained loam
Fertility – medium to rich
pH – 5.8 to 7.2
Temperature – cool
Moisture – average

Culture

Planting – seed 1/4 inch deep
Spacing – 6 x 18 inches
Hardiness – hardy biennial
Fertilizer – medium

Parsley – *Petroselinum crispum* - biennial

Cultivated parsley dates back as far as the Middle Ages and is found wild in southern Europe, Algeria and Lebanon.

Parsley can be grown in all Arkansas home gardens. It has the unique ability to blend flavors and is frequently used in fine herb mixtures. It is also used as a garnish for flavor in salads, soups and stews; cooked with other vegetables; and dipped in a light batter and served as a French fried vegetable. The parsley plant is prized for its ornamental value and may be grown in pots and other containers as well as in the garden.

Root parsley, which is grown in the same manner as carrots, is usually washed, cubed and added to soups and stews. It can be stored like parsnip, but cold is not necessary to develop its full flavor.

Cultural Practices

Planting Time

Parsley is hardy, and seeds may be planted as soon as the soil is warm in the spring. Since parsley is slow to germinate, it should be soaked overnight before planting. Seedlings may be started indoors or in a protective cold frame and transplanted in the garden.

Spacing and Depth of Planting

Parsley seed is short-lived, and fresh seeds are important in establishing a crop. Plant 10 to 15 seeds per inch of row no more than 1/4 inch deep. Thin the seedlings to 4 to 6 inches apart (the seedlings of root parsley are usually thinned to 3 to 5 inches apart). Allow 12 to 18 inches between rows.

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Cultivars

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Seed Per 100 Feet of Row	Remarks
Curled Parsley	Extra Curled Dwarf	60	1/8 ounce	Dark green, deeply cut, curled leaves.
	Forest Green	75	1/8 ounce	Combination of double- and triple-curled variety. Holds color well, good flavor and very productive.
	Green River	75	1/8 ounce	Double-curled leaves stay curly even in heat. Great for drying.
Plainleaf Parsley	Plain Leaf, single	60	1/8 ounce	Dark green, deeply cut. Celery-leaf type.
	Giant of Italy	75	1/8 ounce	Huge, dark green leaves with strong stems, sweet flavor.
	Dark Green Italian	75	1/8 ounce	Strong-tasting celery-leaf type. Use dry or fresh. Stiff, upright stems for bunching.
Root Parsley	Hamburg	85	1/8 ounce	Slow to germinate, produces smooth white roots.

Harvesting

Parsley is usually picked leaf by leaf for daily use after the plants are well established. When the summer supply is adequate, the leaves may be harvested and dried. To store parsley leaves, wash, drip dry and place in a plastic bag or wide-mouthed jar in the refrigerator. Parsley may be covered lightly with straw and picked continuously over winter.

You can also carefully dig a few plants, pot them in 4- to 6-inch pots and continue to grow them in the house for a fresh winter supply. The plants need a cool location and ample light. Discard these plants the following spring. If they are set outside, the leaves will be tough and strong in flavor and the plant will develop seedstalks.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When should parsley be planted in my garden?

A. Parsley requires 70 to 90 days from seed to a harvestable plant. Plant in late fall for winter harvest or in late winter for spring and early summer harvest.

Q. Can a single planting of parsley be harvested for more than a year?

A. Yes. Parsley is a biennial, which means it grows a plant the first year and sends up a seedstalk or flowers the second year. If grown in an area protected from excessively hot temperatures or excessively cold temperatures, parsley can be harvested well into the second year. When a flower stalk is initiated, remove it and continue harvesting the mature leaves. If parsley is forced to grow for long periods at temperatures above 90 degrees F, growth is greatly reduced and death may occur. Parsley is cold hardy and can overwinter. If planted too early in the spring, cold temperatures may cause it to send up a flower stalk during its first season of growth.

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