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Growing Cilantro - The Double Duty Herb

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Did you know cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*) is grown from coriander seed? Grow this tasty herb and harvest two goodies from one plant; first the leaves, then the seeds.

Cilantro leaves are best used fresh in Mexican cuisine, salsa, guacamole, sauces, soups, and casseroles. They also make a great herb butter.

The leaves are a good source of Thiamin and Zinc, and a very good source of fiber, calcium, Vitamins A, B, C, E, V, K, and minerals.

Sow seeds 1/4 inch deep in late spring after all danger of frost has passed. If you're in the south, sow seeds again in the fall. Cilantro prefers cool weather but loves full sun and a well-drained soil with a pH of 6.2 to 6.8. Plants should be spaced about six to eight inches apart. Succession planting every two to three weeks will provide a continuous harvest. Pinch small plants back by an inch to encourage bushy growth.

The plants will dwindle after they bolt in hot weather. That's when they send up tall white flower stalks that produce coriander seeds. Cut the seed stalks and put them in a paper bag to dry, then strip the seeds from the stems. The seeds are used to flavor curries, relishes, pickles, and brines.

This two-for-one herb is a great addition to the garden.

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