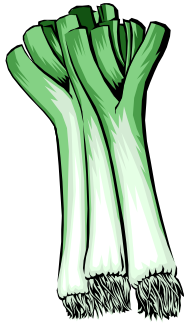


Leek



Allium ampeloprasum var porrum

Leeks are excellent onion substitutes and are easy to grow! They are much milder than onions and quite sweet. Attractive blue-green strap-like leaves emerge from the flavorful white stem. They need a long growing season, and are very cold hardy. Leeks can even be grown in containers, yielding slightly smaller plants.

SITE REQUIREMENTS

Leeks require full sun (at least six hours of direct sun). They thrive in rich, well drained, loose soil. Spread 2-3" of composted manure over the bed and work it into the soil before planting. Also, add a granular all purpose fertilizer and lime to each planting trench.

PLANTING

Start seeds indoors January to mid-March, 8-10 weeks before last frost. Follow planting depth and spacing guidelines on seed packet. Thin seedlings ½" apart and trim to 3" tall for thicker plants. Transplant seedlings into the garden April through July. Plant leeks into the bottom of a 5-7" deep and wide trench. Space plants 4-5" apart. Begin blanching as plants grow and thicken by piling soil or straw around the leeks inside the trench. This practice keeps the bottom of the leeks white and tender.

Leeks can also be directly seeded into the garden mid-April through May. Sow seeds ¼ - ½" deep in rows 12-18" apart. Thin seedlings to 4-5" apart. This crop will mature in time for fall and winter harvest.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

How much water your plants will require depends on the soil and weather. Leeks enjoy lots of water. Water beds when the top 2-3" of the soil is dry. Drip irrigation is the best way to provide even moisture while having fewer disease issues.

FERTILIZING

Mix all-purpose fertilizer into the bottom of each trench at planting time. Side dress every month with a high nitrogen fertilizer until leeks reach mature size.

HARVESTING & STORAGE

Once leeks reach ½" in diameter they are harvestable. Use a garden fork to loosen the soil around the plants. Leeks can stay in the ground well into winter in our climate. If temperatures drop below 20°F mulch with straw to extend harvest season. Harvested leeks will store with refrigeration for about a month.

PESTS & DISEASES

*Thrips cause silver or rust streaks on the leaves which can develop into irregular holes. Spray Spinosad to help control thrip populations.

*Onion maggots will tunnel into the base of leeks. Remove infected crops and replant in a new area if its not too late. Cover new plantings with floating row cover to prevent infestation.

VARIETIES

* American Flag-95 days. 10" long leeks with mild, sweet onion-like flavor and superior quality.

*Bandit-130 days. 12-13" leeks are non bulbing and disease resistant. Great flavor!

*Kilima- 70 days. Good flavored early variety. Excellent tolerance against bulbing and disease.