



### About Leeks

Leeks resemble onions with their mild taste, but rather than forming a tight bulb, it produces a long cylinder of bundled leaf sheaths. This hardy vegetable can be left in the ground during the winter to be harvested as needed. Leeks are often eaten raw in salads or after being boiled or fried for other cuisines.

### When to Plant

If you are in Zone 6 or cooler, plant your leek seeds in early spring when you can break the ground, about 4 weeks before average last frost. If you are in Zone 7 or warmer, plant in the fall.

### Where to Plant

Leeks prefer a sunny spot to grow in soil that is fertile, well-drained, and neutral in pH level. They thrive in traditional garden beds, raised beds, or even in tall containers. Don't grow leeks in the same place year after year as there will be an increased risk of pests and diseases.

### How to Plant

Amend the soil either the season before planting or a few days before planting. To get white stems, you'll need to blanch your leeks. Plant them a little deeper than most seeds, 6-8", and the stems will remain white. After covering the seeds, firm the soil down and water if dry. Continue to water plants well, especially in dry conditions, until they are well established.

### Caring for Leeks

Germination should take about 14-21 days and thinning should begin as soon as possible. Thin the seedling to about 2" the first time, and then thin again after steady growth, so that the plants are about 4" apart. Hoe between the rows regularly to keep weeds low and to aerate the soil. Trim back leaves so they are not resting on the ground. Cut the long dark leaves back by about 2" in early summer, and again in mid summer, and a third time if necessary, in early autumn. Be sure to fertilize leeks by sprinkling widely around the roots, unless they are overwintering (beyond August). You can harvest your leeks at any time, but usually they are best when the stems are at least 1" in diameter. To harvest, don't pull the plant from the ground, but rather lever them out with a spade or fork. Dig up the largest ones first. Store in sand in a cool place and where they will stay fresh for about a month.