

HOW TO GROW DILL !

A member of the family Apiaceae, dill is a close cousin of fennel, caraway, carrots, parsley, and anise. All of these plants produce feathery foliage, tall umbels of flowers, and distinctive, aromatic seeds. Despite dill's delicate appearance, it's actually quite hardy. Dill plants are generally tall, growing 4-5', but both dwarf and mammoth varieties exist.

In the case of dill, both the foliage and dried seeds are used as herbs to flavour a wide variety of foods. Dill complements fish dishes particularly well, and is commonly served with smoked salmon. And, of course, dill is used to flavour dill pickles — the flowers are sometimes used for this purpose. This is a very common culinary herb in the cuisines of Scandinavia, Germany, and Russia.

Difficulty

Easy. Dill works fairly well in deep containers, but will be more robust in the ground.

Timing

Start indoors in the latter half of April for transplanting in early June, or direct sow no earlier than the end of May. Sow repeatedly for a steady supply. If starting indoors, use peat pots — transplant shock can cause dill to bolt. Sow some more seeds in the fall for an early spring crop the following year.

Sowing

Lightly cover seeds after pressing them into the soil.

Soil

Plant dill in full sun or very bright shade, in relatively fertile, slightly acidic soil with good drainage. Aim for a pH of 5.5 to 6.8.

Growing

Space or thin plants to 30cm (12") apart, and keep watered. Tall plants may benefit from staking in breezy gardens. Don't kill the caterpillars that appear on dill plants — they are the larvae of swallowtail butterflies.

Harvest

Snip foliage as needed with scissors. Freeze in ice cube trays as you would basil, as dill doesn't keep its flavour well when dried. The dried seeds keep very well, but seal them in a glass or plastic container, and keep them out of the light. Dill seed should be ground fresh when called for in recipes — the ground seeds also lose their flavour quickly. Harvest individual seed heads as they mature, but cut them from the plant while the stem is still somewhat green. Fully dried seed heads are brittle and easily shatter.

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Storage

Fresh dill is usually available year round. Look for bright, fresh-looking bunches that show no signs of wilting. These will store in the refrigerator for several days.

Seed info

Properly stored dill seed remains viable for up to 5 years. Seeds germinate in 7-10 days in ideal conditions, between 10-24 °C (50-75°F).

Growing for seed

Dill does not cross-pollinate with any other herb or vegetable, but insects will cross different varieties, so grow one variety at a time if you intend to grow the seeds on.

Pests & Disease

Relatively trouble free. All dill varieties attract hoverflies, ladybird beetles, and parasitoid wasps, which all prey on garden pests. It is considered a good companion plant for cabbage, corn, cucumber, lettuce, and onions.

Source:

www.westcoastseeds.com

A collage of logos and text. At the top left is the Harrowsmith & Son logo with the text 'Harrowsmith & Son Plant • Grow • Share a Row presents... SOUPALICIOUS'. To its right is the 'GROW YOUR SOUP' logo featuring a bowl of soup with various vegetables. Below these are three logos: 'PLANT-GROW SHARE A ROW UN RANG POUR CEUX QUI ONT FAIM', the 'Conseil canadien du COMPOST Council of Canada' logo, and the 'GARDEN WRITERS ASSOCIATION' logo featuring a green leaf and a red shovel.

As part of your garden this year, plant and grow an extra row of your favourite veggies and donate the harvest to your local food bank. Help us help all those in need.

Special thanks to McKenzie Seeds for their great growing information and their long-time support for Plant • Grow • Share A Row