

The East London Garden Society

Plant Facts

Coriander



Coriander grows wild over a wide area of Western Asia and southern Europe, prompting the comment, "It is hard to define exactly where this plant is wild and where it only recently established itself."

Coriander seems to have been cultivated in Greece since at least the second millennium BC. The species was cultivated for the manufacture of perfumes and it appears it was used as a spice for its seeds and as an herb for the flavour of its leaves. This appears to be confirmed by archaeological evidence from the same period when large quantities of the species retrieved from an Early Bronze Age layer at Sitagroi in Macedonia could point to cultivation of the species at that time.

Coriander was brought to the British colonies in North America in 1670 and was one of the first spices cultivated by early settlers.

All parts of the plant are edible, but the fresh leaves and the dried seeds are the parts most traditionally used in cooking.

The leaves are variously referred to as coriander leaves, fresh coriander, Chinese parsley and have a different taste from the seeds, with citrus overtones. As heat diminishes their flavour, coriander leaves are often used raw

or added to the dish immediately before serving. They spoil quickly when removed from the plant and lose their aroma when dried or frozen.

The dry fruits are known as coriander seeds. The word coriander in food preparation may refer solely to these seeds (as a spice), rather than to the plant.

Large fruited types are grown mainly by tropical and subtropical countries such as Morocco, India and Australia and contain low volatile oil content. They are used extensively for grinding and blending purposes in the spice trade. Types with smaller fruit are produced in temperate regions and usually have volatile oil content so are highly valued as a raw material for the preparation of essential oil. Commonly found as whole dried seeds and in ground form roasting or heating the seeds in a dry pan heightens the flavour, aroma and pungency.

Having a deeper, more intense flavour than the leaves, coriander roots are used in a variety of Asian cuisines, especially in Thai dishes such as soups or curry pastes.

Coriander is one of the most effective and gentle detoxifiers of heavy metals and toxic contaminants and is excellent for extracting mercury from your body's organs. Heavy metals have been linked to serious health problems such as cancer, heart disease. Coriander is a rich source of minerals such as potassium, calcium, manganese, iron and magnesium. It contains high amount of vitamins A and K and is a proven antiseptic, antifungal and anti-inflammatory. It can help reduce infection and inflammation as it works to clear your system.