

ANOTHER
HERB HERBERT
FACT SHEET

SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

GOURMET VEGETABLES

LEEKS

(*Allium ampeloprasum* var. *porrum*)



Did you know that Leeks were supposedly worn in ancient times by King Cadwaladr's soldiers for identification purposes? The vegetable is also noted in Shakespeare's plays, where he refers to wearing leek as being an ancient tradition.



DESCRIPTION

Being a member of the onion family, the Leek has a slightly mild onion taste but is said to be a more fine, slightly sweeter taste than the average onion. Leeks have two main sections, the leaves, which are flat and green and the white onion base / light green stalk. However, only the stalk is edible and it is usually sliced into fine, ½ cm - 1 cm / 0.2 - 0.4 in thick pieces.



USES

Leeks can be eaten in a variety of different ways. They can be used in fried vegetable dishes and may be left uncooked when used in salads. They are perhaps better known for their use in soups, such as potato soups and can be harvested all year round as needed.



PROPERTIES

This variety contains some Vitamin C and B6, manganese and a small amount of iron and folate.



GROWTH

Plant in spring after the last chance of frost and when the soil is easy to work. The ideal soil is organic and a ph of 7. Plant Leeks 46 cm / 18 inches apart and at intervals, mound soil up around the shoot to



the bottom of the first set of leaves. Repeat this process through out the growing leeks life. This process keeps the stalk white and it also gives the plant support. Harvest when the stem is approximately 2.5 cm / 1 in. in diameter.



CULTIVATION

Likes rich, damp soil, and sunny protected position with additional phosphate. Soil should not be freshly manured with organic manures, as this is likely to encourage bulb rot and the place where the onions are planted should be moved every year, to prevent a build up of fungal spores. If the soil has too much clay, build the bed up to allow some drainage. Leeks prefer a neutral to slightly alkaline soil (7 ph). They can be grown from cold mountainous regions to the tropics. In more Southern regions, where days are longer, leaf growth is promoted and flowering discourages. Soils should be well drained but moist in the growing season. Seed should be sown in spring and then in monthly intervals. If seed is unavailable or a more instant result is desired, plants are now available in your local garden center. Take this fact sheet in to show your local nursery personnel.

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