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Coriander (Cilantro), *Coriandrum sativum* L.

Coriander does not like to be transplanted. This probably explains why it was not a great success in the garden this year. Moreover, it goes to seed quickly and then starts to decline. But it was worth trying to grow the only spice from the north, from the cold regions. Lovers of coriander say it has a fresh citrus taste and a strong aroma, while its detractors say it has a soapy taste and a pungent smell. The perception of the taste of cilantro is said to have a genetic component. This perception is believed to be the result of an enzyme that alters the way we perceive the taste of coriander, a genetic trait that is still being researched.

Which side are you on?



Botanical description

Cilantro or Coriander? While both come from the same plant, they have different uses and tastes. Cilantro is the leaves and stems of the coriander plant. When the plant flowers and turns seed, the seeds are called coriander seeds. Cilantro is also the Spanish word for coriander. Coriander is an annual that is easily reseeded. It is a light green herbaceous plant whose fruits are round, similar to a peppercorn, except that they are hollow, they are light brown or beige in color. They do not have the same taste as the leaves, it is a more nuanced flavor. The smell of its flower is comparable to that of a bug, while its fruit has a pleasant and intense aroma. All parts of the plant are edible and have a taste of their own. The fruit tastes of both dried

lemon or orange peel and sage. The leaves at the base have a more pronounced taste than those at the top. It is similar to Chinese parsley, very refreshing and slightly aniseedy which does not please everyone.

How to cultivate

It is a plant for full sun that likes calcareous and well-drained soils. Coriander does not tolerate transplanting well, so it should be sown directly in the ground. It reseeds itself and once installed, it comes back every year, when the environment is favourable.

Which parts to use

Everything is good in coriander! The seeds or fruits are used for their culinary and medicinal properties, the foliage is used as an herb and the root is used to flavour curry, stew and soup in Thailand.

Medicinal uses

The most common use of coriander is to aid digestion. It stimulates appetite and gastric secretions. It is also an excellent carminative, so it is indicated in cases of difficult digestion, colic and flatulence. It cleanses the digestive system, purifies the breath and purifies the digestive tract. One can chew some seeds or drink an infusion to relieve several digestive problems. Coriander is also said to help reduce mucus formation in the respiratory tract. Try this comforting infusion in the early fall when it's chilly.



David Hoffman's Comforting Herbal Infusion for Colds

- 28 g fresh ginger, sliced
- 1 cinnamon stick broken into two pieces
- 5 ml coriander seeds
- 3 cloves

- 1 slice of lemon
- Liter of water

Simmer the ingredients over low heat for 15 minutes.
Filter and drink hot every two hours.

Cosmetic uses

Coriander is antiseptic and astringent. It can be used as a tonic lotion to tone the skin or soothe inflammation such as eczema or other irritations.

Tonic lotion with coriander

2 ml of cider vinegar
20 ml of coriander tea (leaf or seed)

Mix the ingredients. Apply to well-cleansed face. Allow to air dry or blot lightly.

Culinary uses and recipes

The seeds are widely used in Latin American, Spanish and Oriental cuisine. In powder form, coriander is used in rice, chicken, ratatouille, chili dishes as well as in cakes, cookies and gingerbread.

Indian style curry

- 2-3 dried red chilies
- 90 ml coriander seeds
- 5 ml of fenugreek
- 15 ml cumin seeds
- 15 fennel seeds
- 5 ml black pepper
- 10 ml turmeric powder



Gently roast the ingredients and grind.

The curry base is composed of three very important spices: coriander, cumin and turmeric. These three spices balance each other and improve digestion and assimilation. There are hundreds of variations. It is said that every family in India has its own secret family recipe!

Salade mexicaine

- 1 yellow zucchini
- 1 red bell pepper
- 500 ml of black beans
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 125 ml fresh coriander leaf, chopped
- 60 ml of olive oil
- Zest and juice of a lime
- Salt and pepper

- Chop the vegetables and put them in a dish with the beans and coriander.
- Mix the oil, zest and lime juice.
- Pour in the other ingredients and season to taste.
- Let stand 1 to 2 hours before serving

Inspired by a recipe by Anne Gardon in her book
Le Gourmet au jardin.



History and legends of coriander

Coriander seeds were used by the Semitic peoples over 8000 years ago. The Egyptians also used coriander seeds in all kinds of breads and also made medicinal use of them. Coriander seeds were found in some funerary urns around 1075-945 BCE. For Indians, Chinese, and Persians, this "parsley" was long considered an aphrodisiac plant. Sheherazade herself conferred this virtue on coriander in the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights". Coriander was part of the pharmacopoeia of Hippocrates who advised it, among other things, to promote sleep. In the Arab world, it has been used as an aromatic and medicinal plant since ancient times. Charlemagne immediately recognized the medicinal properties of coriander and ordered its cultivation in the gardens of the imperial farm. In the Middle Ages, because of its smell, it was attributed the property of driving out demons. The first English settlers brought coriander to North America, while the Spaniards introduced it to Mexico and Peru. [Painting "Sheherazade", Hermann Sprengel, 1881]



The information contained in these sheets are partly taken and adapted from the Herb Art notebooks published by the Herbothèque herbotheque.com

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