

## Description

## Coriander *Coriandrum sativum* Family: Apiaceae

Coriander has fine, dark green, shiny fanned leaves similar to Italian Parsley which grows from a small taproot and along a flowering stalk in spring to early summer.

White flowers form on a simple umbel and small round seeds develop throughout the summer. It can grow up to 50cm in height.

## Growing Tips

This annual herb likes well-drained, rich soil, lots of sun and with plenty of air around it, above, and underground. Do not over-water! To avoid bolting, never let the soil dry out and nip the flower heads. For best results allow for 20cm between each herb when planting. Pick the seeds when the majority of them are turning brown and hang upside down in a shady, well-ventilated place.

## Parts Used

Leaves, seeds and roots

## Uses

Its leaves are called Cilantro, (its Spanish name), in America and are used in salads, stir-fry's, soups and salsas. They also flavour the Dhal dish and chutneys in India. They are best used fresh as they lose their flavor with heating, drying or freezing.

They are high in antioxidants and its seeds have a nutty, anise-like flavour with a hint of orange, and can be used in savoury as well as sweet dishes. They form part of the Garam Masala spice mix in India; in Europe they are used in sausages, bread and beer.

The roots are used in Asian cooking such as in Thai curry pastes; their flavour is more intense than that of the leaves and seeds. A Turkish dish (Palathai) uses ground Coriander seeds with flour to coat dried fig cakes.

Medicinally, the leaves have a cleansing and stimulating effect on the liver, while the seeds are used to ease flatulence and bloating, stimulate appetite and recently have been found to positively influence fat metabolism. It is rich in essential oils which are effective in improving memory, stimulating appetite, aiding rheumatism and arthritis as well as being used in cosmetics for their fragrance.

## Origin & History

Evidence of Coriander dates back to ancient Egypt where the herb was cultivated. The Old Testament makes reference to it and in ancient Greece it was used in perfumes.

