

Dill



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Sow dill seeds directly into the soil, 2 to 3 inches apart within rows or 3 plants per 2- to 3-gallon container. Begin planting in the spring, 2 to 3 weeks after the average last frost date.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create a well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows the pH is below 6.2, apply lime as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist, but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Avoid wetting leaves to avoid fungal diseases. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. Direct sowing is recommended because dill has a taproot system and does not transplant well. Lightly cover with soil and water.

Fertilize: In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting, according to label directions. Reapply 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), 4 weeks after planting.

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Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicides regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Dill can be used fresh, dried, or frozen. Water well the day before harvesting. Once dill has a good stand after about 6 weeks, using clean sheers or snips, prune stems with leaves from the oldest portion of the plant. Always wash fresh herbs before use. Remove small fresh dill leaves from the stem before using them in a recipe. To dry dill, gather stems together and tie them with twine. Hang the bundle upside down in a dark, dry, well-ventilated place for about 2 weeks.

Other: To save seeds after dill flowers, let the dill flower heads turn from light green to brownish tan. Cut the flower from the plant, leaving enough stem to hang it in a brown bag. Put flowers into a bundle using twine or a rubber band, and hang the flowers upside down in the brown bag. After a week, shake the bundle with the flowers still inside and secured, and the seeds should fall out. Save seeds in a dark, dry place in an unsealed paper envelope for next spring.

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