

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* (Mill.) Nym.)

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SUMMARY

Parsley is both nutritious and a storehouse of several vitamins, minerals and many other valuable substances. It is a good source of vitamin C, vitamin E and flavanoids including quercetin, apiole, myristicin and luteolin. It also possesses terpenes, phthalides, iron, calcium, phosphorus and manganese and powerful antioxidants that help in building a strong immune system, fight chronic diseases and slowing ageing.

INTRODUCTION

This is a hardy bright, green, biennial herb, usually grown as an annual, for its leaves which are in great demand globally for garnishing. It is well known for its use in numerous culinary preparations such for flavouring salads, soups, and stews. It is also valued as an ornamental plant, grown in pots as well as in gardens. In addition to the forms grown for their foliage a turnip-rooted parsley is grown for its edible root. The swollen roots of turnip-rooted parsley are eaten as a cooked vegetable. In our country it has no commercial importance, its contribution to our diet is negligible, though it is one of the best vegetable sources of iron, potassium, vitamin A and C. Parsley is used for its leaf in much the same way as coriander, although it has a milder flavour than coriander.



Parsley is finely chopped and mixed with garlic or shallots to make persillade which is added towards the end of cooking to flour stews, vegetables and meat dishes. Parsely root is used as a vegetable to enhance soups, stews and condiments of Europe. It retains its flavour after long cooking times. The generic name, *Petroselinum*, and the common name, Parsely, come from the Greek word *Petroselinon* (from *petra* = rock and *selinon* = celery).

Nutritional Profile

Parsley contains more vitamin C than any other standard culinary vegetable, with 166 mg per 100 g. This is three times as much as oranges and about the same as blackcurrents. The iron content is exceptional with 5.5 mg 100 g and the plant is a good source of manganese (2.7 mg per 100 g) and calcium (245 mg per 100 g). It is also exceptionally high in potassium, with one whole gram of potassium in 100 g.

The nutritive value of Parsley (per 100 g of edible portion)

Constituents	Content	Constituents	Content
Moisture (g)	74.6	Thiamine (mg)	0.04
Protein (g)	5.9	Carbohydrate (mg)	0.18
Fat (g)	1.0	Carotene	1920
Minerals (g)	3.2	Calcium (mg)	390
Fibre (g)	1.8	Phosphorus (mg)	175
Energy (g)	87	Potassium (mg)	72
Vitamin C (mg)	28	Sodium (mg)	4
Niacin (mg)	0.5	Iron (mg)	17.9
Riboflavin (mg)	0.18		

Varieties

Two forms of parsley are used as herbs: **Curly leaf** and Italian or **Flat leaf** (*P. neapolitanum*).

Curly leaf : Fibrous roots and very curled or crinkled leaves. It is used for its leaves, Curly leaf parsley has no flavour, so, it is used as a greenish.

Flat leaf : Plain leaves and fleshy roots. It is grown for both its leaves and fleshy roots that are used for flavouring soups and stews. It has a less harsh flavour than the seed. Flat leaf parsley has a grassy, green taste with a herbaceous and slight lemony aroma.

Dry parsley has no flavour. The grayish brown seed has a bitter, harsh and terpeny taste. The roots has a strong aroma.

The most common cultivars are Moss Curled, Extra Doubled Curled, Fern-leaved, Ever green, Extra Triple Curled, Plain, Dark Green Italian and Morgo.

Crop Production

It is a cool season crop and grows well in a temperature range of 15-20°C. A rich moist soil with good drainage and a pH range of 5.5-7.0 is preferred for its growth. Being biennial in nature it grows well in good loamy soil, having abundant nitrogen, organic matter and plenty of moisture.

Seed rate: For transplanting method: 250-300 g/ha

For direct sowing 3.0-3.5 kg/ha.

Sowing and transplanting

Spacing: Row to row 30-45 cm, Plant to plant 10-15 cm.

In plains the seed is sown from the beginning of September to the end of November, while in hills is from the beginning of March to the end of May or in Autum. Parsley is grown from seeds which are small and slow to germinate. Furanocoumarins in parsley's seed coat may inhibit the germination of other seeds, allowing parsley to compete with nearby plants. Therefore, to induce quicker germination, soak the seeds for overnight.

The young plants are more resistant to cold than heat, require protection, frequent irrigation and damage from drying. Parsley should be grown when the conditions are favorable. It thrives in most kinds of soils but prefers a rich and some what heavy one, and a partially shaded situation. The seeds may be sown in beds arranged for irrigation, in drills 2.5 cm deep made at 30 cm apart, from the beginning of September to the end of November, and the plants are thinned out to 5 to 7.5 cm as under if they come up too closely together.

When the weather is hot, the seeds will often lie for a fortnight in the ground before germination, but when the cold season has fairly set in, the young plants usually appear above ground a few days after sowing. All after attention consists of the usual routine of weeding when needed, and watering about once a week when the weather is dry. Well rotten FYM @ of 10 tonnes/ha and 50 kg urea, 100 kg each of DAP and K₂ O are applied at last ploughing. The crop requires frequent irrigation at an interval of 8 to 10 days. Good drainage is essential for the success of the crop. The entire top is clipped off to thicken the crown of leaves on well established plants

Harvesting

Parsley is harvested over a long period of time by cutting outer and larger leaves only, tying them in bunches for market. By this method, the plant continues to produce a marketable product for many weeks. At the end of the cropping cycle, the entire plants are harvested. The parsley leaves which are packed loose or bunched, are thoroughly washed before packing in baskets. The packed material can be stored at 0°C and at high humidity for over a period of two months.

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