

MOLES SEEDS

Leeks

Cultural Leaflet: ZZ565

Leeks are a great winter hardy vegetable, and we offer a range of varieties allowing harvest from mid-July to mid-May. F1 hybrids justify their higher price by producing a more uniform crop of straight leeks.

All leeks do best in a deep rich soil with a pH of neutral to slightly acidic. Ideally organic matter will have been added the season before, although if adding the same year be sure to add well rotted garden compost.

Leeks are also used as a feature plant in ornamental flower beds, especially the blue-green varieties.

Plant Sales

Sow March onwards direct into pots or cell packs for sales April onwards.

Propagation and Growing-on

Sow leek seed thinly in early to mid spring into a seed bed 2.5cm deep at a minimum temperature of 7°C, with rows 15cm apart. Alternatively sow under cover into modules in mid winter at a temperature of 10°C, harden seedlings off before transplanting. Germination takes 14-21 days. Pelleted seed is available for accurate seed placement.

As the seedlings begin to develop and look strong, thin to 5cm apart. Once the seedlings reach 20cm in height and the thickness of a pencil they can be lifted and prepared for transplanting.

Prepare the main bed, using a dibber make deep planting holes of around 15cm deep and 15cm apart with 30cm between rows.

Lifting with a hand fork will minimise damage to the shanks. Once lifted trim the roots to 2.5cm and the leaves to 15-20cm.

Place one plant into each hole so that the growing point is at or just below the soil surface. It is not necessary to infill the holes but instead water well to settle the roots over time as the leeks grow the hole will fill itself.

Crop Care

Keep beds weed free during the growing period. Once established do not water except in dry periods. In mid-late summer top dress with a high nitrogen fertilizer, or in late winter for the late crops.

To increase the length of white stem blanching is needed. Draw dry soil up around the stems when they are well developed. Ensuring no soil falls between the leaves. Blanching will need to be done several times through the season finishing in October. Feeding will increase the thickness of the stems although late feeding is not advised.

Harvesting

Early varieties are ready for harvest September to November. Begin harvesting early while still quite small to ensure a long harvest period. Mid season varieties can be lifted December to February with late varieties lifting February to April. As leeks are winter hardy they do not all need to be lifted at once and can be left in the ground during the winter months until they are needed.

Pest and Disease

Monitor the crop for the usual onion troubles, such as:

- Onion Fly
- Neck Rot
- Stem and Bulb Eelworm
- White Rot
- Rust
- Leek Moth

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.

(12/15)

