

LEEKS (*Allium porrum*)



Full Sun



LEEK

Leek is an onion like plant used in cooking and recognized by its distinct odor. Leek is a relative of the onion, chives and garlic. The plant has long, quill-like leaves and a bulb which contains the fruit.

Leek is believed to be native either to Algiers or to Switzerland. The herb was first grown by ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. In Europe, leek was cultivated during the Middle Ages as a savored vegetable and a flavoring agent.

Planting and culture of Leeks

Leeks like a rich, deep loam, but are not too particular about soil requirements. They respond readily to heavy applications of mature compost. Well-rotted manure may be substituted if necessary, but avoid the use of raw manure. Leeks will tolerate a moderately acid soil, but it must be one rich in nitrogen.

Seed is planted thickly, 1/2 inch deep. When the seedlings are eight inches high they should be carefully dug up. Remove half the tops and replant the seedlings six inches apart in trenches six inches deep and three or four inches wide.

A heavy supply of sifted compost humus should be incorporated with the soil in the bottoms of the trenches.

As the plants grow, the sides of the trenches should be broken down to blanch the edible stems. During the early stages of their growth, leeks require an abundance of plant food. A plentiful supply of moisture is necessary to make this available to them.

Leeks benefit from generous applications of organic matter and repeated mulchings.

Varieties of Leeks

Broad London and Elephant are very popular. Other hardy varieties are Giant Flag, Carentan Winter, and Italian Winter.