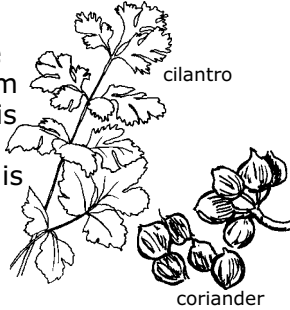


CILANTRO AND CORIANDER Science Page

DID YOU KNOW?

The herb cilantro and the spice coriander come from the same plant. Cilantro is the name used for the plant's leaves. Coriander is a spice made from the seeds. The seeds and leaves taste completely different.



ORIGINS

Coriander is native to southern Europe and the Mediterranean. It is one of the oldest spices in recorded history, and was used as long as 7,000 years ago.

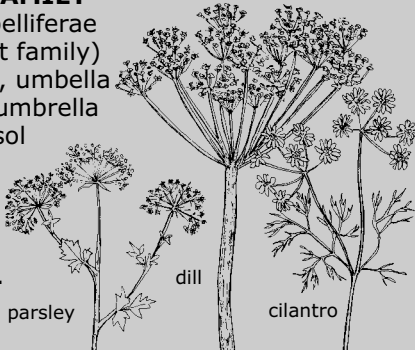


Coriander has been found in ancient Egyptian tombs.

CLASSIFYING CILANTRO

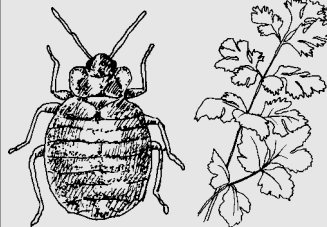
FAMILY

Umbelliferae (Carrot family)
In Latin, umbella means umbrella or parasol to provide shade from the sun.



GENUS

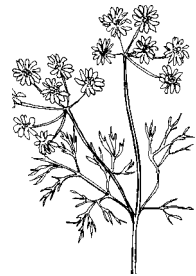
Coriandrum means "bed bug" in Greek.



Some say the fresh leaves smell like bed bugs.

SPECIES

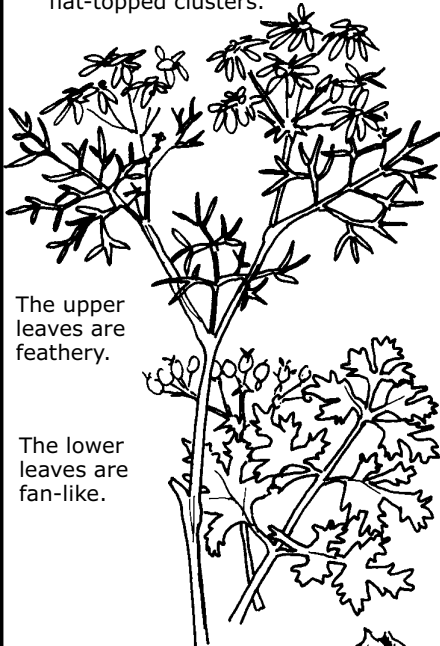
sativum means "that which is planted."



All of the plants in this family have tiny flowers arranged on stalks that radiate from a central point, like the frame of a parasol or umbrella.

THE CILANTRO PLANT

The tiny white or pink flowers are arranged in flat-topped clusters.



The upper leaves are feathery.

The lower leaves are fan-like.

The seeds are in ribbed pods.



GROWING AND HARVESTING CILANTRO AND CORIANDER

Cilantro is easy to grow in almost any well-drained soil. Sow seeds after the last frost date. Begin harvesting when the plant is at least 15 cm high. If the stems are cut at about 2.5 cm above the ground, the plant will continue to grow



I planted cilantro in the shade so it will stay cooler. That way, it won't produce flowers and seeds so quickly, but will keep producing leaves.

USES

Cilantro is used in Latin American and Southeast Asian salads, soups, and meat dishes. Coriander is used in European, Indian, and Middle Eastern dishes.



Coriander is one of the spices I use in curries.



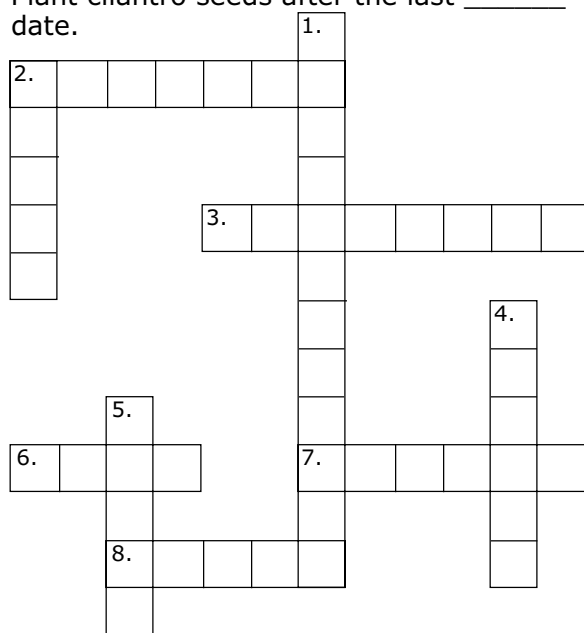
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- The scientific name for coriander is *Coriandrum* _____.
- Coriander and _____ come from the same plant.
- Cilantro is an _____.
- The seeds of coriander are in _____ pods.
- Coriander is a _____.

Down

- Cilantro belongs to the _____ family.
- Plant cilantro in the _____ so it will not produce flowers and seeds so quickly.
- Coriander is one of the _____ spices in recorded history.
- Plant cilantro seeds after the last _____ date.



SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

How to keep coriander seeds fresh

Coriander contains chemicals called essential oils. These oils give the coriander spice its distinctive taste and smell. They also are extracted for use in perfumes and medicines. High quality seeds are needed for this purpose.

A researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow wanted to find out how storing coriander under different conditions affects the essential oils. He stored some coriander seeds in the dark and some in the light for one year. Then he analyzed the oil composition of the seeds in the two groups. The oil composition of seeds that were stored in the dark changed only slightly. However, those stored in the light changed a great deal. That means, if you want to keep coriander fresher, store it in the dark, not in the light!

Source: Misharina, T.A. (2001). Effect of conditions and duration of storage on composition of essential oil from coriander seeds. *Applied Biochemistry and Microbiology*. 37 (6), 726-32.



QUOTE

“The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.”

from ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas
by Major Henry Livingston Jr.

Sugar-plums are candied coriander, a sweet that was popular in 1822, when this poem was written!

Crossword puzzle answers: Across: sativum; 3. cilantro; 6. herb; ribbed; 8. spice. Down: 1. Umbelliferae; 2. shade; 4. oldest; 5. frost.



CILANTRO CORN RELISH

This is good served with enchiladas, burritos, and grilled meats.

Yield: about 2 cups

Ingredients

- * 4 ears of corn, or one 10-ounce package frozen corn
- * 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- * 1 small red onion, chopped
- * 1/2 cup vinegar
- * 1/4 cup sugar
- * 2 teaspoons fresh oregano, or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- * 1 small chili pepper, seeded and chopped
- * 1/2 teaspoon salt
- * 1 red bell pepper
- * 1/3 cup minced cilantro

Instructions

- Cut the kernels from the ears of corn. You should have about 2 cups.
- Remove the seeds from the red bell pepper and chop.
- Remove the seeds from the chili pepper and chop.
- Add the cumin to a medium saucepan. Toast until you just begin to smell it.
- Add chopped onion, vinegar, sugar, oregano, chili pepper, and salt to the pan, and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- Add the bell pepper and the corn and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes.
- Put the mixture in a container, cover the container, and refrigerate.
- Just before serving, add minced cilantro.