Growing Leeks

growing

Spring/Autumn/Winter vegetable

grow your own grub

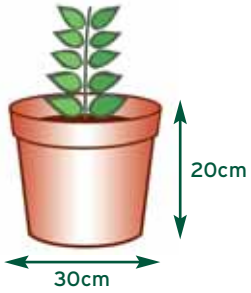
image sourced from www.thinkvegetables.co.uk.

'tasty food from tiny spaces'

Leeks are in the same family as onion and garlic and are easy to grow over winter. You can start growing leeks from March so they will be ready over winter.

You can grow them in:

- Pots or any containers with holes in the bottom – 6-8 plants in a 30cm wide and 20cm deep pot.
- A tall, thin container like a chimney pot.



Sowing Seeds

You can plant your seeds from March to June. The seeds will need to be grown in a small pot inside your house before moving to a bigger pot outside.

- Plant your seeds in a small pot, (a yoghurt pot with holes in the bottom is ideal), using peat free multipurpose compost.
- Fill the pot with soil leaving a space of 3cm from the top.
- Put 4 seeds on the soil with some space between each one. Then cover lightly with a little more soil.
- Keep the pots indoors on a windowsill and keep the soil moist with water. Keep the pots on a tray to stop water spills
- Make a label with the name of the plant on it and the date that you planted them.

When the leek plants are 10cm tall they are ready to move into bigger containers outside.

Transplanting (moving your plants outside)

- Take your plants outside. Using a knife with a rounded end gently put the knife into the soil about 2 cm from the stalk of the leek. Lightly lift the soil so that the roots of the plant come out of the pot.
- Half fill your pot with soil and using a pencil make holes 6 - 8cm apart for each leek, deep enough for the roots of the plants.
- Gently put a leek into each hole and press the soil down around the plant and give it a little water.

Water your plants enough so that the soil is always moist, especially in hot weather.

As the leeks grow keep covering the white part of the plant with soil to make them grow taller.

Your leeks will be ready around 4 months after you put the plants outside. Harvest the leeks before they are 3cm wide. (continued overleaf)

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Harvesting

Harvest by putting a small hand fork into the soil near the plant to lift and loosen the soil. Then pull the leek gently from the soil with your other hand. Store in the fridge in a plastic bag or wrapping for up to 7 days.

Eating Leeks

eating

5 A DAY

Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)

1 leek counts as 1 portion.

In season October - March

Preparation

- Wash the leeks to make sure all of the soil is removed.
- Cut off the roots and about half of the green leaves at the top of the plant.
- Slice the leek into small circles and wash again before cooking.

How can I use my leeks?

Leeks can be baked, steamed, stir-fried or boiled as part of any meal. Leeks add flavour to soups and stews and taste great with potato and cheese for hearty winter meals.

Cheese and Leek Jacket Potatoes
Serves 2

Ingredients

- 2 medium baking potatoes
- 2 dessertspoons sunflower or vegetable oil
- 1 large leek, sliced
- Pepper to taste
- A dash Worcestershire sauce (optional)
- 50g cheddar cheese, grated

Method

1. Scrub the potatoes and pat dry.
2. Place in a pre-heated oven at 200°C and bake for approximately 1 hour until soft. If using a microwave prick the potatoes with a fork, place on a piece of kitchen roll and cook for 8 – 10 minutes until soft.
3. After the potatoes are ready, heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the leek for 3-4 minutes.
4. Cut the potatoes in half lengthways, scoop out most of the flesh into a bowl and mix in the leeks, pepper and Worcestershire sauce.
5. Place the mixture back in the potato jackets.
6. Top with cheese and place under a preheated grill for 3-4 minutes or back in the oven for a further 5 minutes or microwave for 2 minutes until the cheese is melted and golden.

Serving Suggestion

Serve with fresh salad.

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