

Care Guidelines

HORSERADISH

Horseradish's most common use is as a condiment or added to sauces to add a 'kick'. Only the root is eaten. The bite and aroma of the horseradish root are almost absent until it is grated or ground. During this process, as the root cells are crushed, volatile oils known as isothiocyanate are released. Vinegar stops this reaction and stabilizes the flavor. For milder horseradish, vinegar is added *immediately*. It is an extremely vigorous plant and given a small amount of attention, will flourish in most gardens.

Planting

Plant horseradish into a well prepared, loose-soil, weed-free bed in early spring. Space plants 10-12 inches apart in rows that are 3 feet apart. Place the root piece with the flat end up and the slanted end down at a 45° angle in the soil. The flat end should be 2 inches below the soil surface. The size and diameter of the horseradish root does not determine the ultimate size of the plant.

Weeding & Fertilizing

Plants usually grow vigorously enough to shade out weeds within the row. Weed between rows as needed throughout the summer. Horseradish is not a heavy feeder. Fertilize with a 10-10-10 product at a rate of 5 pounds per 100 square feet each spring and work in well.

Harvest

You can start to harvest horseradish roots the next spring after planting, however if you wait until fall the roots will be larger. Dig the plants and harvest as many roots as you like. Any roots left in the soil will re-sprout into new plants next spring. Divide your horseradish plant every year or two IF you do not harvest roots, otherwise the crop will deteriorate.

Use

Wash, peel and dice horseradish roots in a well-ventilated area. A whiff can bring you to tears. Place in a blender or food processor with a small amount of water and a couple ice cubes. Cover tightly and grind until desired consistency is reached. Vinegar or lemon juice stops the enzyme process that makes horseradish so hot. So the degree of heat is determined by when the vinegar is added to the fresh horseradish. For milder horseradish, the vinegar is added immediately. If exposed to air or stored improperly, horseradish loses its pungency rapidly after grinding. Fresh horseradish also loses flavor as it cooks, so it is best added towards the end of a dish when cooking.