HERBS · A COOL, BRIGHT PATIO OR BALCONY

Let's grow cilantro.

Coriandrum sativum

This plan is for **Slow-bolting leaf cilantro**

A fresh handful for tacos, from your own pot.

12 × 12 × 10 in. **8 seeds → 4 plants**

Before you start
Start during a cool growing spell; spring or fall usually suits this plan, while warm regions may grow cilantro in winter.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 22, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT
Sun or light shade
Morning sun is useful when afternoons begin to get hot.

WATER
Moist, not soggy
Keep seedlings moist and make sure excess water escapes.

FEEDING
Light feeding
Extra fertilizer cannot stop a heat-stressed plant flowering.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One 12-inch square planter, at least 10 inches deep
- ✓ 8 cilantro seeds from a slow-bolting variety, such as Leisure
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a watering can, and scissors

THE SOIL
Miracle-Gro Organic Potting Mix (US, feeds for up to 2 months)

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

A cool, bright patio or balcony. Start with **seeds**.

THE POT

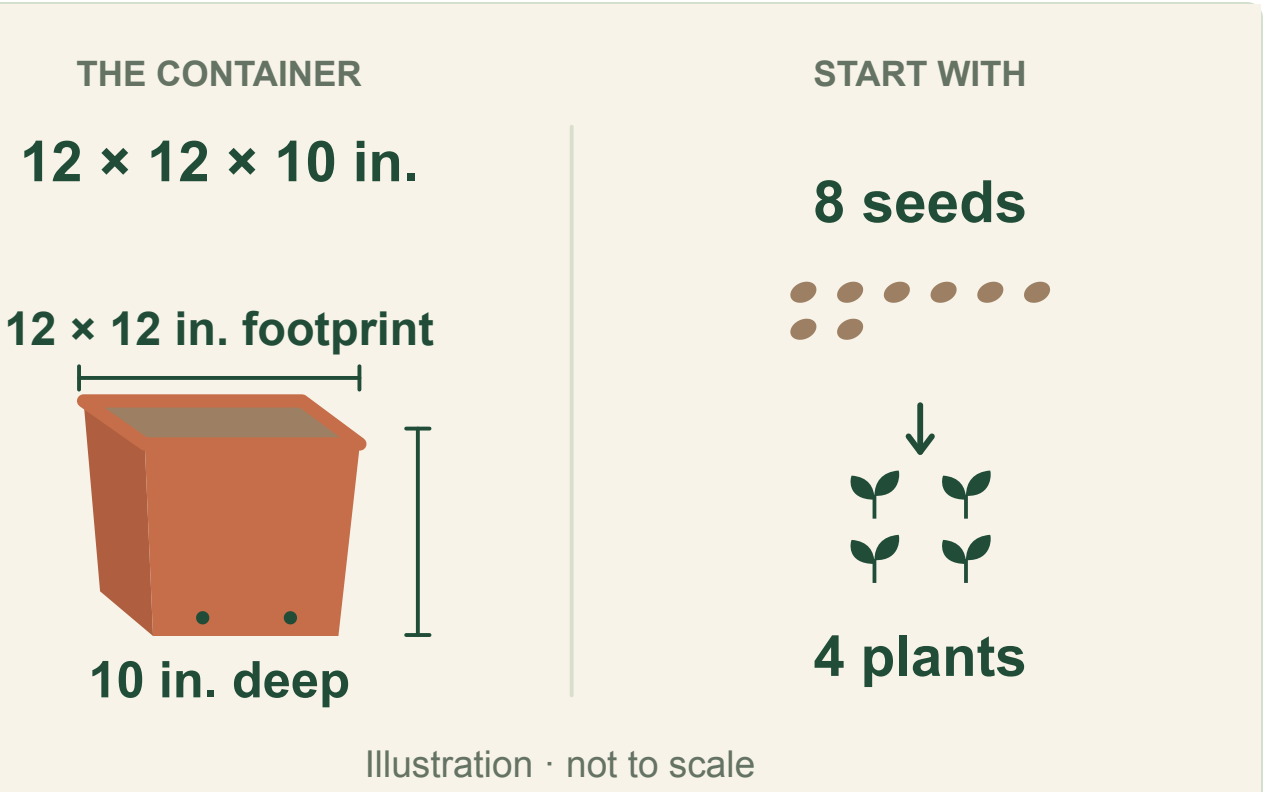
12 × 12 × 10 in.

One draining square planter with room for roots.

HOW MANY

8 seeds → 4 plants

Two seeds at four spots, 6 inches apart; this is a leaf-harvest plan.



12 × 12 × 10 in. · 8 seeds → 4 plants One draining square planter with room for roots. Two seeds at four spots, 6 inches apart; this is a leaf-harvest plan. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Sow in the final pot

Dampen the mix. Mark four spots in a 2 × 2 grid, 6 inches apart.

02

Cover four pairs of seeds

Place 2 seeds at each spot and cover with ½ inch of mix. Water gently.

03

Keep the strongest at each spot

Keep the surface moist during sprouting. Once seedlings are established, snip extras to leave four plants. A round coriander seed unit can produce more than one seedling.

04

Snip a few outer stems

Wait until plants have plenty of growth, around 6 inches tall. Take a small amount and keep the center and healthy leaves intact.

Help with the setup: drainage holes and saucers · potting mix vs. garden soil.

Other ways to start

Use small nursery starts

Choose 4 young plants, keep each root ball intact, and set them at their existing soil level in the four positions. A large plant already sending up a flower stalk is a poor shortcut to a long leaf harvest.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seed surface damp. Once established, water as the top inch starts drying; let excess drain.

FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

AMOUNT

1½ teaspoons in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Every 4 weeks outdoors.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

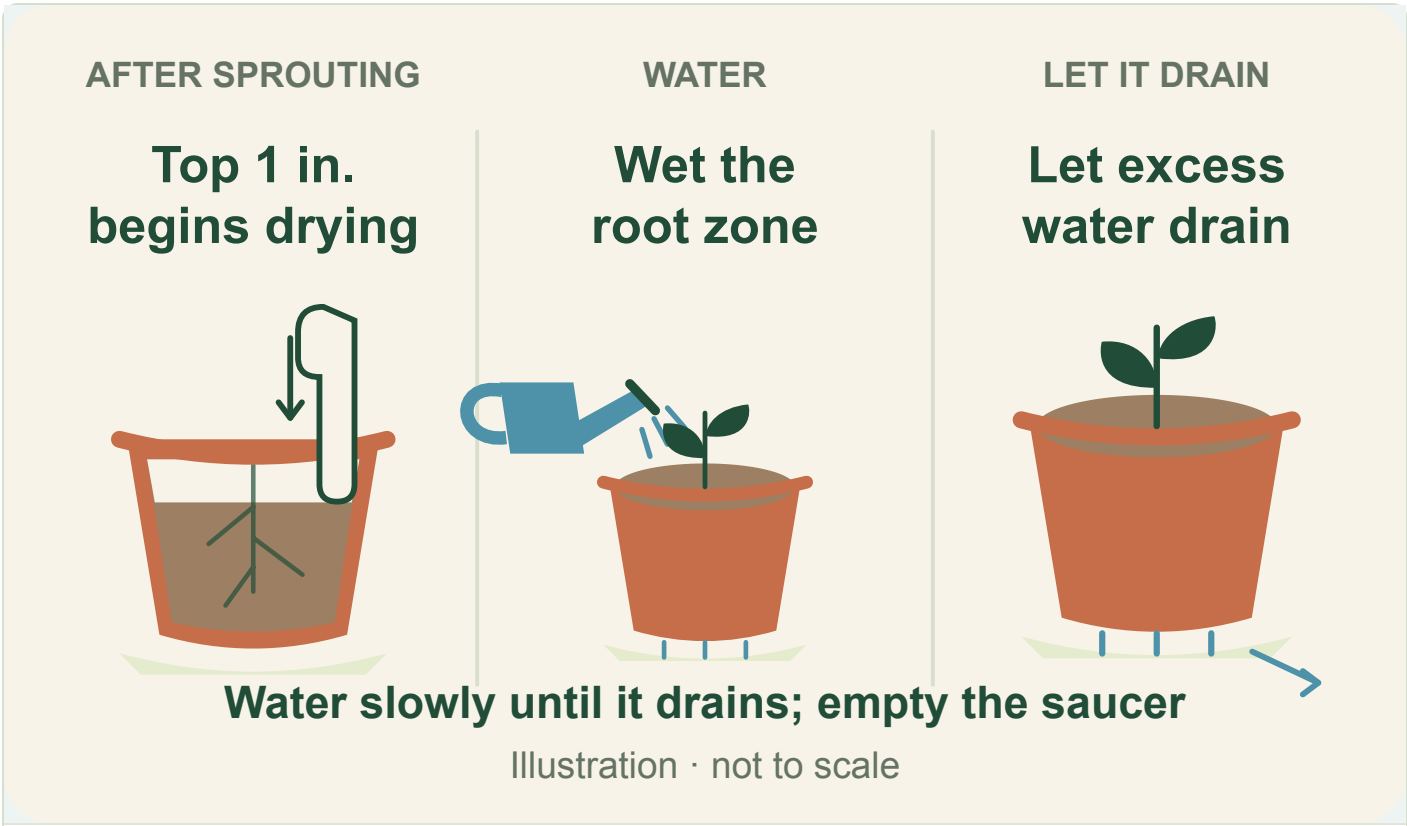
No extra feed at sowing. Feed only if usable leaves are still growing after starter feed ends; do not feed to reverse bolting.

Half the product's outdoor concentration; use this lighter herb recipe after starter feed ends.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check the mix each morning. Keep the surface damp while seeds sprout. For established plants, water when the top inch is starting to dry, then let the pot drain completely. Do not leave it standing in a full saucer.



Check before watering. Keep the seed surface damp. Once established, water as the top inch starts drying; let excess drain. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

With fresh enriched mix, skip extra feed at sowing. This short cool-weather leaf crop may finish before the starter nutrients run out.



1½ teaspoons in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on. Every 4 weeks outdoors. No extra feed at sowing. Feed only if usable leaves are still growing after starter feed ends; do not feed to reverse bolting. Original illustration; not to scale.



US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble All Purpose

24-8-16

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

A LIGHT TOP-UP ONLY IF NEEDED LATER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

If the plant is still making usable leaves after the starter feed ends, mix 1½ teaspoons of the US 24-8-16 product into 1 gallon of water. Apply at the roots every 4 weeks outdoors. This is half the outdoor label concentration, following University of Minnesota container-herb guidance. Do not feed to try to reverse bolting.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

Use the named US formulation. A different product or concentration needs different directions. The amount mixed is a batch, not a dose to pour into one pot.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Sprouting and the leaf-growing season

Germination can take about 3 weeks, so keep the pot labeled and the surface moist. A slow-bolting variety still eventually flowers; it is not a permanent supply of leaves.

Choose a cool growing window

Choose cool spring or fall conditions. In warm climates, the useful growing season may be winter. Heat and lengthening days can shorten the leaf-harvest period.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Are cilantro and coriander different plants?

They are the same plant. In US cooking, cilantro usually means the leafy herb and coriander means the mature seeds.

Why are new leaves thin and feathery?

The plant may be moving toward flowering. Harvest useful leaves and plan another sowing; cutting off one flower stalk will not make it young again.

Can I keep harvesting all summer?

Hot weather often cuts the leaf season short. Try another small sowing when conditions are cool enough instead of promising one plant will last indefinitely.

Spacing plants and sowing the next batch

Space plants for a first leaf harvest

Four widely marked positions keep this first sowing easy to manage. The recipe is not a dense commercial herb crop or a dedicated coriander-seed production plan.

Stagger sowings for fresher leaves

Write the sowing date on the pot label. Once you know how cilantro behaves in your spot, stagger another pot to reduce the gap between leaf harvests.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- Utah State University: cilantro sowing and harvest ↗
  https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/cilantro-coriander-in-the-garden
- NC State: cilantro identity and flowering ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/coriandrum-sativum/
- University of Florida: coriander fruits contain paired seeds ↗
  https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/leonco/2026/09/03/start-it-or-sow-it/
- University of Minnesota: container-herb nutrition ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-herbs
- University of Maryland: herb containers ↗
  https://extension.umd.edu/resource/growing-vegetables-containers-and-salad-tables
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-all-purpose-plant-food.html
- Manufacturer: starter feed in the named potting mix ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/potting-mix/miracle-gro-organic-potting-mix/78951430.html

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

Published September 23, 2026 · Updated September 24, 2026

Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.