HERBS · A SUNNY OUTDOOR POT SHELTERED FROM STRONG WIND

Let's grow dill.

Anethum graveolens

This plan is for **Fernleaf dill**

A few feathery sprigs for potatoes, fish, or pickles.

5-gallon pot **3 seeds → 1 plant**

Before you start

For this outdoor plan, sow after frost danger during mild weather; choose a sunny spot sheltered from strong wind.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 23, 2026 View sources ↗



LIGHT

Lots of sun

Aim for 6–8 hours of direct sun.



WATER

Keep lightly moist

Give the roots steady moisture without leaving the pot soggy.



FEEDING

A light feed later

After starter nutrients, feed gently every 4–6 weeks if still growing.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One draining 5-gallon pot, at least 12 inches wide and deep
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a gentle watering can, and scissors
- ✓ 3 Fernleaf dill seeds

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 sunny outdoor pot sheltered from strong wind. Start with **seeds**.

THE POT

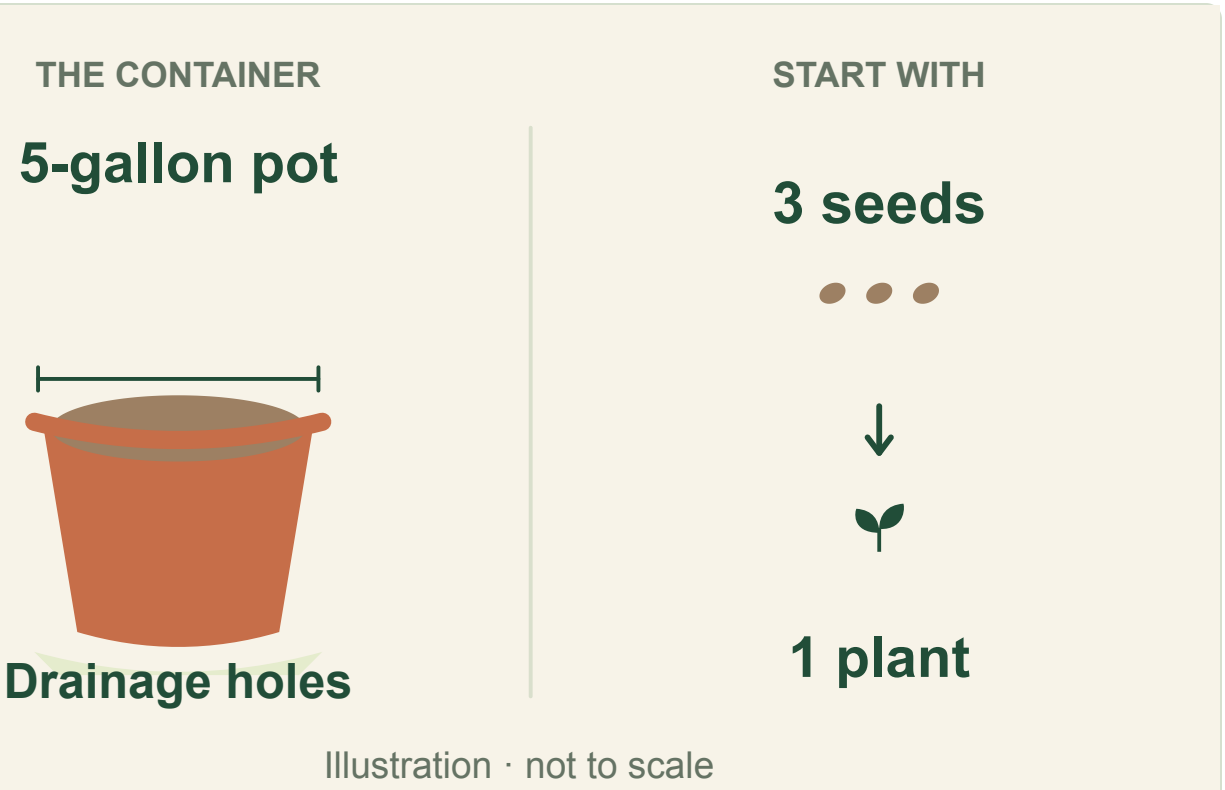
5-gallon pot

At least 12 inches wide and deep, with open drainage holes.

HOW MANY

3 seeds → 1 plant

Choose compact Fernleaf dill for this one-plant plan.



5-gallon pot · 3 seeds → 1 plant At least 12 inches wide and deep, with open drainage holes. Choose compact Fernleaf dill for this one-plant plan. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Fill the final pot

Dampen the mix and leave an inch below the rim. Start in this pot so you will not need to disturb the taproot later.

02

Sow three seeds

Place 3 seeds about an inch apart near the center, ¼ inch deep. Water gently and keep the seed surface moist.

03

Keep just one

When seedlings are about 2 inches tall, snip the weaker two at soil level. Give the remaining plant sun and shelter from strong wind.

04

Snip a few side fronds

Once there is plenty of leafy growth, take a small amount from the sides. Leave the main growing stem and most foliage intact.

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

Other ways to start

Use a very young nursery start

Choose one young Fernleaf plug with an intact root ball. Plant at its existing level without pulling the roots apart. Dill dislikes root disturbance; direct sowing avoids that step.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seeded layer damp. Once established, check daily and water as the top ½ inch starts drying; 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 4–6 weeks outdoors.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

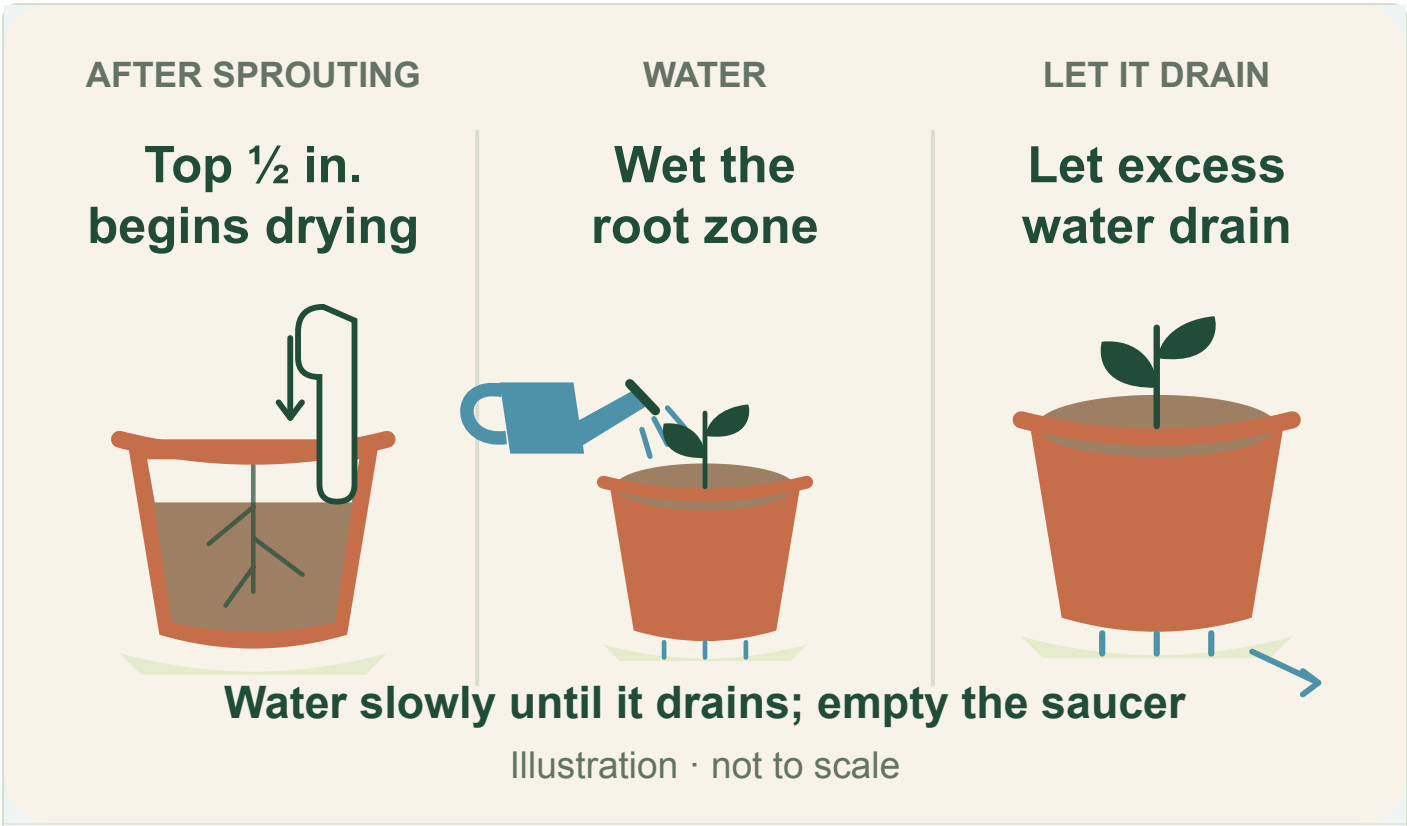
Wait until the fresh mix's starter feed is spent. Feed only during active growth; pause when growth stops.

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

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check each morning. While seeds are germinating, keep the shallow seeded layer damp with a gentle sprinkle. Once established, water when the top ½ inch starts to dry, wetting the root zone and allowing runoff. Wait while the mix is damp. The reminder is for checking, not automatic daily watering.



Check before watering. Keep the seeded layer damp. Once established, check daily and water as the top ½ inch starts drying; 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.

Add no extra fertilizer to the fresh enriched mix at sowing. Check the bag's feeding period before adding a top-up; a young seedling does not need an immediate fertilizer routine.



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 4–6 weeks outdoors. Wait until the fresh mix's starter feed is spent. Feed only during active growth; pause when growth stops. 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.

AFTER THE STARTER FEED, DURING ACTIVE GROWTH

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

Mix 1½ teaspoons of the US 24-8-16 product into 1 gallon of water. Apply at the roots every 4–6 weeks if the plant is still actively growing after the mix's starter nutrients run out. This half-strength outdoor dilution and lighter interval follow Minnesota's dill guidance. Use enough solution to wet the pot and drain, not the entire gallon.

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 your first leaf harvest

Allow about 7–21 days for germination in suitable warmth. Fernleaf's seed supplier lists roughly 55–60 days to a substantial leaf harvest. Small earlier snips depend on how much healthy growth the plant has made.

When to sow and start a second pot

For this simple outdoor plan, sow after frost danger. A mild growing period is easier than intense summer heat. Dill is an annual; begin a second pot later if you want a longer supply of fresh leaves.

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

Something looking off?

Why is my dill tall and floppy?

Check sunlight and wind exposure. A dim or very windy spot can make the plant harder to support. Move to better light gradually and add a small loose support if needed.

Why is it flowering instead of making leaves?

Flowering is a normal part of dill's annual life cycle. Pick remaining useful leaves and sow the next pot; extra fertilizer will not keep it leafy forever.

What are the tiny insects on sticky shoots?

Check for aphids. A gentle stream of water can dislodge a small colony; support the delicate stems and inspect again afterward.

Choosing compact dill and harvesting

Choose Fernleaf for this pot

This compact cultivar is a practical container choice. Other dill varieties can be much taller; keep the packet so you know the expected size.

Pick leaves first or let seeds mature

This plan starts with leaf harvests. If you leave flower heads to mature, you can collect ripe dill seed later, but expect fewer tender leaves as the plant ages.

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.

- University of Minnesota: dill care and its lighter feeding interval ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-dill
- Johnny's Selected Seeds: Fernleaf timing ↗
  https://www.johnnyseeds.com/herbs/dill/fernleaf-dill-seed-921.25.html
- Burpee: dill sowing and common problems ↗
  https://support.burpee.com/support/solutions/articles/60000966814-learn-about-dill
- Illinois Extension: dill varieties and growing ↗
  https://extension.illinois.edu/herbs/dill
- 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

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