HERBS · A BRIGHT PATIO OR BALCONY NEAR THE KITCHEN

Let's grow parsley.

Petroselinum crispum

This plan is for **Culinary flat-leaf parsley**

Fresh leaves for dinner, a few stems at a time.

12 × 12 in. pot **1 nursery plant**

Before you start

For this simple plan, set your nursery plant outdoors after frost danger has passed; use a bright patio or balcony spot.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 23, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Sun or light shade

A sunny spot is a good start; a little shade is tolerated.

WATER

Steady moisture

Do not let the whole root ball dry out between checks.

FEEDING

A gentle top-up later

Fresh enriched mix first; diluted herb feeding when needed.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ One pot about 12 inches wide and 12 inches deep, with holes
- ✓ Fresh potting mix, a watering can, and clean scissors
- ✓ 1 small, healthy flat-leaf parsley nursery plant

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 bright patio or balcony near the kitchen. Start with **nursery plant**.

THE POT

12 × 12 in. pot

About 12 inches wide and 12 inches deep, with drainage.

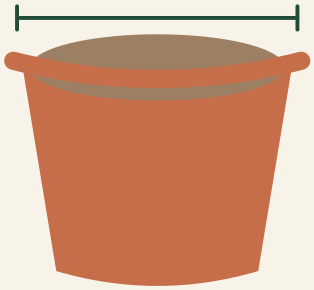
HOW MANY

1 nursery plant

Choose a labeled culinary flat-leaf parsley plant.

THE CONTAINER

12 × 12 in. pot



Drainage holes

START WITH

1 nursery plant



Illustration · not to scale

12 × 12 in. pot · 1 nursery plant About 12 inches wide and 12 inches deep, with drainage. Choose a labeled culinary flat-leaf parsley plant. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Buy one rooted plant

Choose labeled flat-leaf parsley. A nursery plant gets you past the slow and sometimes uneven seed stage.

02

Keep the roots together

Dampen the mix. Slide the plant out gently and set the intact root ball at its existing soil level. Do not tease apart its taproot.

03

Water it in

Water slowly until a little drains below. Leave room under the rim for future watering and check moisture each morning.

04

Pick from the outside

Once it has settled and made fresh growth, cut a few outer stalks close to the base. Leave the center and plenty of leaves growing.

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

Other ways to start

Start with 6 seeds

Sow 6 seeds in a small central patch, about ⅛ inch deep. Keep the seed surface evenly moist and allow 2–5 weeks for emergence. When seedlings are 2–3 inches tall, snip extras and retain one strong plant. This small seed count is our spare-seed layout, not a promise that every seed will sprout.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Keep the seed surface moist. Once established, water as the top inch starts drying, before deeper roots dry through; 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 3–4 weeks outdoors.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

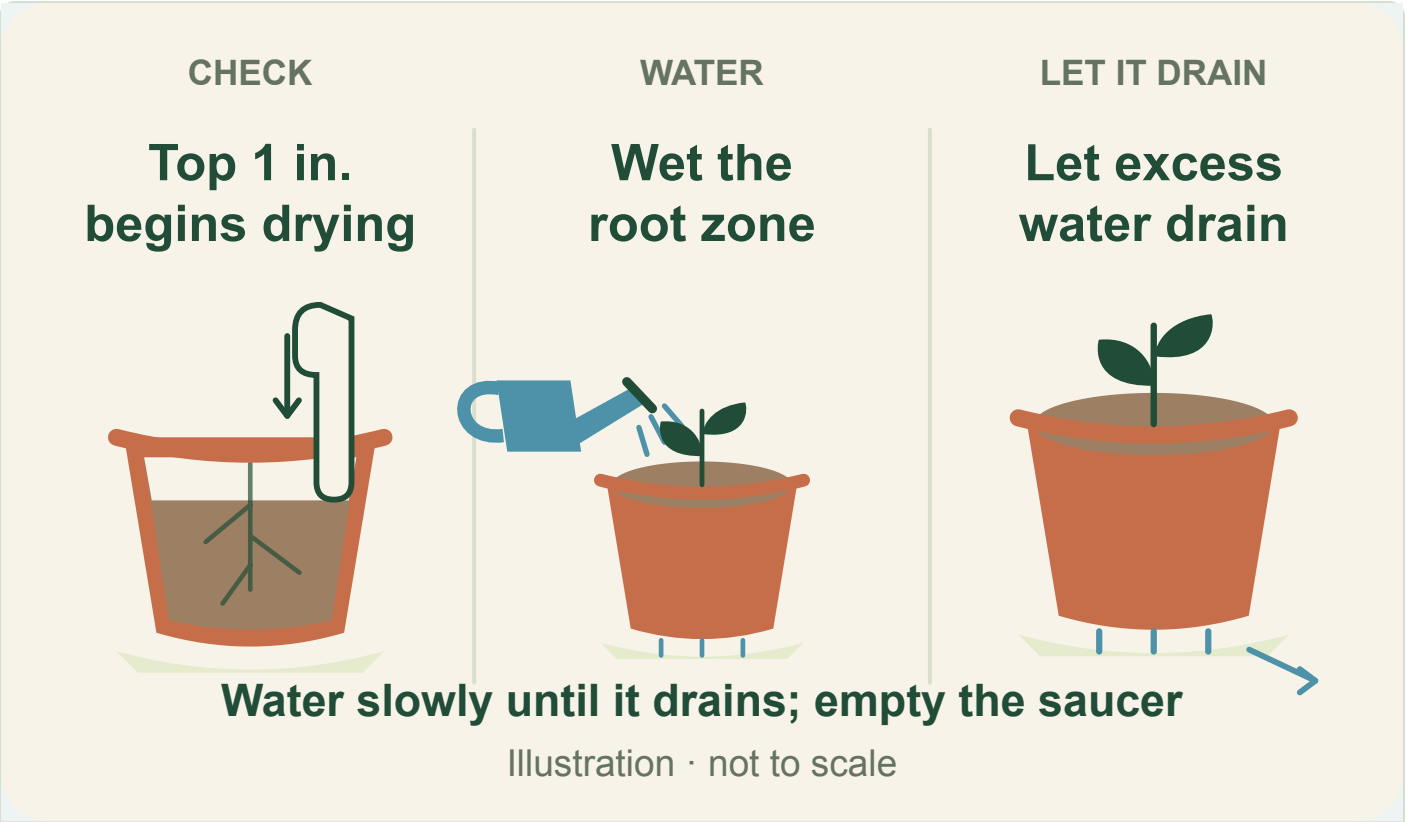
Wait until the fresh mix's starter feed is spent. Feed only during active growth; pause when growth stops.

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

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check each morning. Water when the top inch is beginning to dry, before the root ball becomes dry throughout. Wet the mix evenly, allow runoff, and empty any saucer. Seeds need a moist surface while germinating; a nursery plant needs moisture around the deeper roots as well.



Check before watering. Keep the seed surface moist. Once established, water as the top inch starts drying, before deeper roots dry through; 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.

Skip extra fertilizer at planting with the enriched mix listed here. Check the bag's feeding directions before topping up; its starter nutrients do not last the same length of time in every pot.



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 3–4 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 MIX NEEDS REPLENISHING

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. Feed at the roots every 3–4 weeks while growing outdoors, after the starter feed is used up. This is half the product's outdoor concentration, following Minnesota Extension's container-herb guidance. Use enough to wet the pot and drain; do not empty the whole gallon into it.

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

A nursery start can supply a small picking after it settles and makes new leaves. Seed-grown parsley is slower: germination alone may take several weeks. Harvest gradually rather than stripping a small plant.

Outdoor planting and winter limits

For a simple outdoor start, plant after frost risk has passed. Parsley tolerates cool conditions once established, but a small exposed pot is not guaranteed to survive a harsh winter.

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

Something looking off?

My seeds have not sprouted. Should I start over?

Parsley can take 2–5 weeks to emerge. Keep the surface moist and avoid repeatedly digging for seeds. Fresh seed and patience help; a nursery start is the quicker route.

Why is it sending up a tall flowering stem?

Parsley is biennial and commonly flowers in its second year. For tender cooking leaves, start a fresh plant rather than trying to solve normal flowering with fertilizer.

What is eating the leaves?

Parsley is a host for black swallowtail caterpillars. Identify a caterpillar before treating it; you may choose to share a spare plant. Check both sides of the leaves for other pests too.

Repotting and choosing culinary parsley

Move up a pot size when roots fill it

This 12-inch-wide, 12-inch-deep pot is our one-plant starter layout. If roots fill it and moisture becomes hard to manage, move to a larger draining container; the starting size is not a lifetime limit.

Choose flat-leaf culinary parsley

This is a leaf-harvest plan for culinary flat-leaf parsley. Cilantro is a different herb, and Hamburg parsley is grown for its root. Keep the nursery label with the pot.

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: parsley seed depth, germination, and harvest ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-parsley
- Wisconsin Extension: parsley transplants and taproot care ↗
  https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/parsley-petroselinum-crispum/
- University of Minnesota: diluted feeding for container herbs ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-herbs
- Illinois Extension: parsley and swallowtail caterpillars ↗
  https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/flowers-fruits-and-frass/2021-05-21-herb-year-parsley
- University of Maryland: container depth and root room ↗
  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

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