

## **Parsley**

### ***Petroselinum crispum***

#### **Plant Description:**

Parsley, including both leaf and root type, is a member of the same family as celery. There are numerous cultivated varieties of parsley, all of which are nutritious, containing vitamin A, vitamin C, several B vitamins, calcium, and iron. Quite often parsley is left on the plate to become the last bite, as it tends to sweeten the breath. While most consider Parsley to be an edible crop for humans, it is also used in butterfly gardens to feed the larval stage of several butterfly species, including the Black Swallowtail.

Mature Size: Varies; approx. 12 inches tall and wide, larger when blooming

Growth Rate: Moderate; matures in 70-80 days

Plant Habit: Upright, bushy

Plant Spacing: Plant seeds ¼ inch deep, 2 to 3 inches apart. Thin to at least 6 to 12 inches apart, or if planted in rows, at least one foot apart.

#### **Ornamental Characteristics & Uses:**

Foliage Color: Varying shades of medium to dark green

Flower Color: Indistinguishable in North Florida

Bloom Time: Not applicable in North Florida

Attracts Wildlife: Butterflies

Uses: Often used fresh as a garnish for many dishes or as main ingredient in the Greek salad, Tabouli. Some gardeners plant only to attract the butterflies.

### **Growing Requirements:**

Cold Hardiness Zone(s): Although a hardy biennial, parsley performs best as an annual in Northern Florida, growing well from September through May.

Exposure: Full Sun to Partial Shade

Water Needs: Moderate

Soil Tolerances: Prefers moist, well drained soils.

Soil pH: Slightly acidic

Maintenance: Low

**General Care & Growing Tips:** This plant requires little care other than watering during dry conditions. Maintaining a 2- to 3- inch layer of organic mulch will help retain soil moisture. A slow-release fertilizer at planting time may be sufficient for growth through the season. The plant performs best in full sun, but may benefit from some afternoon shade in hot climates.

**Common Pests:** Various butterflies lay eggs on leaves, which hatch into caterpillars that will completely eat the plant before moving on. However, these same caterpillars become some of Florida's most beautiful butterflies. If planting for human consumption, be sure to plant a few extra plants for the butterflies to munch on, as they require the food to complete their life cycle.

### **References:**

Jordi, R. (2006). *Parsley *Petroselinum crispum**. University of Florida. Retrieved from: [nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/herbs/parsley.html](http://nassau.ifas.ufl.edu/horticulture/herbs/parsley.html)

McAvoy, G. (n.d.). *Parsley - More than a Decorative Green Leaf*. University of Florida. [http://hendry.ifas.ufl.edu/HCHortNews\\_Parsley.htm](http://hendry.ifas.ufl.edu/HCHortNews_Parsley.htm)

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