

# Growing Parsley



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Parsley is one of America's most popular culinary herbs. It is easy to grow from seed, complements a heap of dishes, and has added health benefits when used in larger amounts.

Most gardeners grow flat-leafed or Italian parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var. *neapolitanum*) for culinary purposes as it has more flavor than curly leaf type (*Petroselinum crispum* *crispum*). However, the curly type is more ornamental with its bright green curly leaves, remains more compact, and can be enjoyed in dishes when chopped up or dried.

## GROWING AND HARVESTING PARSLEY

Parsley is a great addition to existing landscape and containers and can even be used as a ground cover. Parsley should be seeded about 1/8-inch-deep and plants should be spaced 10 inches apart, in full sun to part shade. They can be slow to germinate, so be patient and consistently water to ensure they do not dry out. Soak seeds overnight before planting for better germination rates.

Parsley can be harvested throughout the growing season by cutting stems at the bottom of the plant. It is best to harvest in the morning after the dew has dried but before the leaves are softened from heat.



Photo: Chandan Chaurasia via Unsplash

## BLACK SWALLOWTAIL CATERpillARS

Parsley is also known to provide food for black swallowtail caterpillars, also known as parsley worms. These black swallowtail caterpillars that eat parsley in your garden bring further intrigue when you investigate their defense mechanisms. Although they are light green with black stripes and yellow dots when they are larger, they start out dark colored with tiny spikes and white patches, resembling bird droppings. They defend themselves when poked with a horn-like, stinky yellow scent gland called an osmeterium that emerges from behind their head and is believed to fend off ants and other predators.

Photo: Do Huong via Unsplash

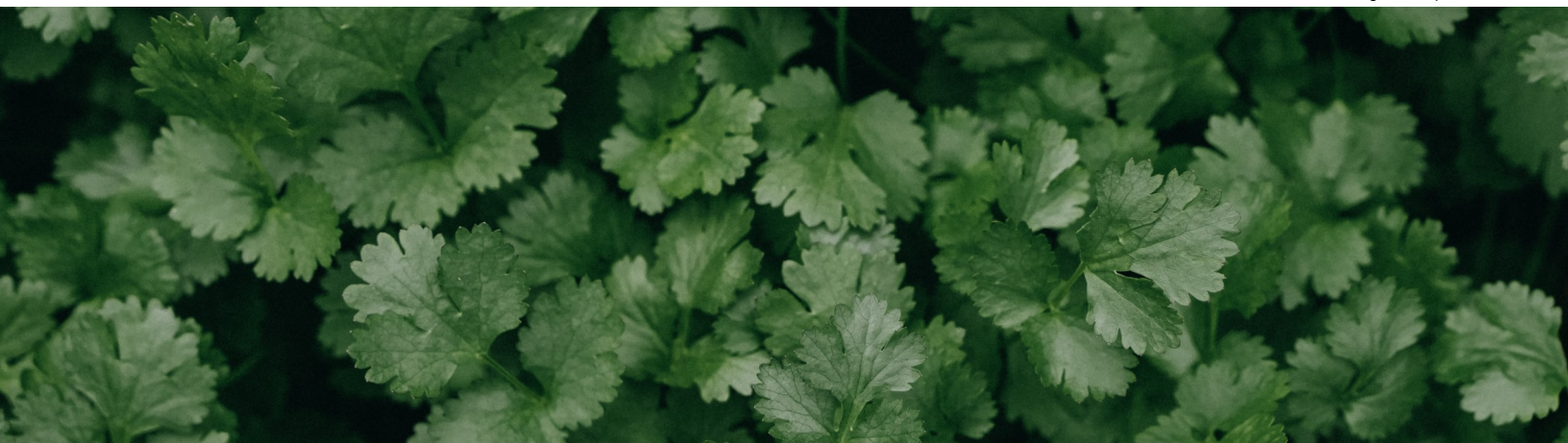




Photo: Sumeet B via Unsplash

## BEAN SALAD WITH PARSLEY

1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed  
1 can (15 ounces) no added salt black beans, drained and rinsed  
1/2 cup chopped red onion  
1 1/2 cups chopped tomatoes  
1 cup chopped parsley  
3 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Black pepper, to taste  
1/4 cup olive oil

In a medium bowl, combine garbanzo beans, black beans, red onion, tomato, and parsley; stir. In a small bowl, whisk lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Pour dressing over vegetable bean mixture, and stir to coat all ingredients. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

*Yield: 6 servings*

*Nutrition Facts (per serving): 220 calories, 11 grams fat, 210 milligrams sodium, 23 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams fiber, 8 grams protein*

## HEALTH BENEFITS

Fresh parsley is high in vitamin A and potassium and contains moderate amounts of vitamin C, calcium, folate, and phosphorous.

## EATING MORE HERBS

- Replace all or some lettuce with herbs, in salads, sandwiches, etc.
- Add herbs to potato or pasta salads
- Use fresh herbs in pasta or with cooked meats
- Add fresh herbs to drinks
- Add handfuls of fresh herbs to soups
- Use herbs as a garnish for dinner plates

## SOURCES

[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](#). Jan 2009.

Sarah Rautio, Consumer Horticulture Educator: [Michigan State University Extension](#). 2017.

Carol Kagan, Master Gardener: [Penn State Extension](#). Feb 2021.

Allsup, K., Haag, B., Frillman, N. "Herb of the Year: Parsley". *Flowers, Fruits, and Frass*. May 21, 2021. <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/flowers-fruits-and-frass/2021-05-21-herb-year-parsley>

## MORE INFORMATION

Simply Nutritious, Quick, and Delicious blog, [go.illinois.edu/SimplyNQD](https://go.illinois.edu/SimplyNQD)



**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

LEARN MORE  
**extension.illinois.edu**

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**  
University of Illinois | U.S. Department of Agriculture | Local Extension Councils Cooperating  
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment..