

Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum (Umbelliferae)

Fast facts: Acres in Washington: 200
Number of growers: 150

**Description
Of crop:**

Cilantro is an annual herb in the carrot family. When the target crop is seed, it is called coriander. Other names include Chinese parsley or Mexican parsley. Common varieties in Washington are Leisure and Pokey Joe. It is a soft, hairless plant growing to 1-3 feet in height. The leaves are variable in shape, broadly lobed at the base of the plant and slender and feathery higher on the flowering stem. The flowers are borne in small umbels, and are white or very pale pink. Cilantro is a peppery-tasting green similar in appearance to celery leaves. All parts of the plant are edible, but the fresh leaves and dried seeds are most commonly used in cooking. It is a popular seasoning for many Mexican and Asian dishes. Cilantro greens are marketed fresh. However, cilantro can also remain in production until seeds develop. The seed may be harvested and sold as the spice coriander. Cilantro requires about 80 days to become established but the crop will grow back within 30 days, allowing 2 to 3 harvests per season. Fresh leaves and stems are hand harvested 1 inch above ground level usually in the morning when it is cool. Cilantro tends to bolt at high temperature, which changes its taste. The oils of the cilantro leaves contain certain antibacterial properties and can be used as a fungicide. In Washington, cilantro is grown for local consumption and farmers markets. It is used and sell exclusively for use in Hispanic cooking. For example, one Franklin County grower in the lower Columbia Basin, grows only tomatillos, radish, bunching onions, and cilantro for use in his taco wagon.

Key pests:

No insects or diseases significantly impact cilantro production in Washington. However, weeds are a problem since they compete with the crop for water, sunlight and nutrients. These include barnyard grass, Russian thistle, kochia, lambquarter, and pigweed.

Key pesticides:

Weeds are controlled through hand tillage and hand weeding.

Critical pest

Control issues:

There are no pest issues.

Expert contacts:

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Location

Of production: Franklin, Benton, Yakima, Grant and Adams.

