



Dill!

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Dill is one of the most commonly grown herbs. It has flowers, seeds and dark green leaves. The leafy green part of the plant also is referred to as the Bouquet or Ducat.

All parts of the dill plant can be used, including the seeds, leaves and seeds in umbels. The umbel also is defined as the flower head.

The herb is native to the Mediterranean region and southern Russia. Dill is used to make cucumber pickles, pickled beets, salads, sauerkraut, green beans, meatballs, egg dishes, stews, fish, chicken and breads.

Growing

Dill grows best from the seed in full sun and a well-drained soil that is not overly rich. Plant the herb about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep and 18 inches apart. Water dill one to two times per week. The seedlings will appear between 10 and 14 days.

The plant produces small yellow flowers, which then become seeds. Dill does not grow well when transplanted. If the soil remains undisturbed during the growing season, more dill plants will grow next season.

Harvest and Storage

The seeds and leaves are edible and can be harvested any time after the seedlings develop. Simply cut the leaves at the stem of the plant and discard the thick or tough stems.

The fresh leaves can be wrapped loosely in a slightly damp paper towel and then again in a plastic storage bag. The seeds and dried leaves can be stored in an airtight container. Be sure to label the container with contents and date. Use the herb within one year of storage for best flavor.



Preservation

- **Air-drying:** Cut the dill plant when it is about 6 inches tall. Tie the stems to create a small bundle. Place the bundle inside a brown paper bag. The bag will protect the plant from dust and other irritants. Additionally, the bag helps prevent any herb from falling onto the ground. Put the bag in a cool, dark room for approximately two weeks. The plant will fall apart easily once fully dried. Store in an air-tight container.
- **Oven-drying:** Cover a baking sheet with parchment paper and place the herbs on top of the pan. Put the herbs in a conventional oven set at 100 degrees Fahrenheit and bake until the plant is brittle and crumbles easily. Be sure to check the herb often while heating to prevent burning.
- **Microwave drying:** Place the dill between two microwave-safe paper towels and microwave on high for about one to three minutes, testing every 30 seconds. Allow time to cool and be sure to check if the plant is dry and brittle. Continue microwaving in 30-second increments until the plant becomes brittle.
- **Freezing:** Place the dill in an air-tight freezer bag and freeze. Alternatively, chop the herb and place in an ice cube tray. Cover with water and freeze. Put the cubes in a labeled plastic freezer bag for use in soups or stews.
- **Pickling:** Refer to NDSU Extension publication "[Making Pickled Products](#)" to learn more about pickling produce.

Cooking Tips

Dill generally is used as a fresh herb to garnish dishes. For best flavor, add the fresh herb near the end of cooking to preserve the enriched flavor. In a cold dish, add the herb several hours ahead of time to allow the flavors to blend. One tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried.

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Recipes

Key to abbreviations

c. = cup
tsp. = teaspoon
Tbsp. = tablespoon

g = gram
mg = milligram
kg = kilogram

oz. = ounce
lb. = pound



Dill Pickle Pasta Salad

8 oz. dry whole-wheat shell pasta (about 3 c.)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sliced pickles
 $\frac{2}{3}$ c. cheddar cheese, cubed
3 Tbsp. white onion, finely diced (optional)
2 Tbsp. fresh dill
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. pickle juice

Dressing Ingredients

$\frac{2}{3}$ c. mayonnaise
 $\frac{1}{3}$ c. Greek yogurt, plain
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. cayenne pepper (or to taste)
4 Tbsp. pickle juice
Salt and black pepper to taste

Bring pasta to a boil and cook until tender. Drain and rinse with cold water. Toss pasta with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pickle juice and set aside for five minutes. Combine all dressing ingredients in a small bowl and mix well. Drain pasta and discard any remaining juice. Add pickles, cheese, onions and dill to pasta. Top with dressing and stir to combine. Chill for at least an hour before serving.

Makes 16 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings. Each serving has 110 calories, 9 g fat, 3 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 150 mg sodium.



Pickled Dilled Beans (for Canning)

4 lb. fresh tender green or yellow beans (5 to 6 inches long)
8 to 16 heads fresh dill
8 cloves garlic (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. canning or pickling salt
4 c. white vinegar (5%)
4 c. water
1 tsp. hot red pepper flakes (optional)

Wash and trim ends from beans and cut to 4-inch lengths. In each sterile pint jar, place one to two dill heads and, if desired, one clove of garlic. Place whole beans upright in jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch head space. Trim beans to ensure proper fit if necessary. Combine salt, vinegar water and pepper flakes (if desired). Bring to a boil. Add hot solution to beans, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch head space.

Know your altitude prior to selecting your processing time. Adjust lids and process in boiling water bath for five minutes if your altitude is less than 1,000 feet, for 10 minutes if your altitude is 1,001 to 6,000 feet or 15 minutes if your altitude is above 6,000 feet.

Makes about 8 pints.

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