

LEEK

Blue Leek, Great Headed Garlic, Levant Garlic

Allium ampeloprasum

Amaryllidaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Leeks are a close biennial relative of both onion and garlic, but do not form bulbs. Leaves are flat and large, and when cooked they are milder in taste than onions and are mainly used in soups and similar dishes.

Uses

Leeks are most commonly cooked. They can be eaten raw but are reported to have a somewhat harsh flavor that is moderated by cooking.

Common Names

- French
 - poireau

Cultivation

- **Elevation** - up to 2000 m
- **Rainfall** - 350 -2,800 mm/year
- **Soil Types** - Prefers well-drained soils with pH 4.5-7.5
- **Temperature Range** - 6 - 27 C
- **Day Length Sensitivity** - Not a significant factor
- **Light** - Prefers full Sun

A. ampeloprasum seeds are slow (10-12 days) to germinate. Seeds are typically planted in a nursery. When 15-20 cm tall, the resulting seedlings are transplanted into holes 10-12 cm deep. Space seedlings 10-15 cm apart in rows 30-45 cm apart. Leeks require moist soils throughout the growing season.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are harvested as soon as they reach full size, or they can be left in the ground until needed. Bolting and flowering require long days and this does not happen often in the tropics. Leeks can be propagated by seeds or bulbils (like garlic).

Pests and Diseases

Leeks can be affected by purple blotch or root rot. Thrips can also cause losses.

Cooking and Nutrition

The white and light-green portions of the stem are cooked in soups and stews. Leeks are a good source of vitamins A, C, and folate, and can be added to many dishes.

References

Messiaen, C.-M. and A. Rouamba. 2004. *Allium ampeloprasum* L. [Internet] Record from PROTA4U. Grubben, G.J.H. and O.A. Denton (Editors). PROTA (Plant Resources of Tropical Africa / Ressources végétales de l'Afrique tropicale), Wageningen, Netherlands.

Ecocrop. 2007. *Allium ampeloprasum*. FAO, Rome, Italy.