



Winter

Plant Now

Lemongrass

Planting information by garden writer and kitchen gardener: Linda Ross



Homegrown lemongrass is pure happiness – so much more fragrant and fresh than you can buy. It is a good source of vitamin A, and the leaves can be used for infusing in tea, while the stem bases can be used in curries and Thai cooking.

Growing instructions



Photo: Hakcipta Yosri

Plant late winter in cooler areas-- gardeners in tropical areas should plant during the wet season. Growing into grass-like clumps 1 m tall, lemongrass is adapted to hot wet summers and dry warm winters, is drought tolerant and will grow on a wide range of soils but prefers rich, moist loams. If it is damaged by frost in cooler areas, the tops should not be cut until all danger of frost has passed. This helps to protect the centre of the plant from further cold damage.

In the kitchen

To store lemongrass, stand in a glass of water in the fridge and cover with plastic so the stems don't dry out. Stem lengths can also be frozen. Make your own lemongrass-ade from 1 cup lemon grass, finely chopped, half a cup boiling water, 1 cup mineral or soda water, and sugar to taste. Pour the boiling water over the lemon grass and infuse.

Growing tips

- Use the lemongrass leaves as mulch around vegetables, because it can be cut continuously for mulch during the warmer months. As an added advantage it will have some pest repellent properties!
- It can be planted on the contour on steep banks to control erosion.
- Lemongrass is useful also as a barrier to running grasses around vegetable gardens.
- Heavy frost can kill lemongrass, so grow it in pots in cold areas and bring it indoors in winter.