

# Dill

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Dill (*Anethum graveolens*) is a culinary herb that typically reaches 2 to 4 feet tall at maturity. Dill grows best when the soil temperature is around 70 degrees Fahrenheit. It can be grown in the ground or in containers, both indoors and outdoors. The leaves are used fresh or dried as an herb in dips, soups, salads, and other dishes. The seeds are used as a spice for pickling and for adding flavor to stews and roasts.

## Grow it

### Varieties

- Bouquet, Dukat, Fernleaf, Long Island, and Superdukat

### Soil Preparation

- Incorporate a 1- to 2-inch layer of compost into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil.

### Planting

- Plant in late February to early March, after all danger of frost has passed and the soil has warmed.
- Plant seeds ¼ inch deep and 12 to 15 inches apart.
- Plant transplants at the same depth at which they were grown in the containers, 12 to 15 inches apart.

### Growing Dill in Containers

- Choose a deep container that has drainage holes in the bottom.
- Use normal potting media and keep the plants well-watered.
- If growing inside, place the plants where they will receive at least 5 to 6 hours of direct sunlight each day.
- Dill grown indoors may need to be supported with a stake because low light levels are likely to cause the stems to become tall and spindly.

### Fertilizing

- If growth is low to moderate, spread 1 teaspoon of 15-5-10 fertilizer around each plant. Mix the fertilizer into the top of the soil and water it in.
- If growth is vigorous, fertilizer may not be needed.

### Watering

- The plant's most critical need for water occurs during seedling germination and establishment. After the plants become established, water only when the soil is dry, being careful not to overwater.

### Care During the Season

- In areas with strong gusts of wind, dill will need to be protected or staked to ensure that the tall stems are not blown over or broken.

### Insects & Diseases

- Insect pest and disease problems are not common for dill. However, if something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.
- Dill attracts and provides food for many beneficial insects, one of which is the caterpillar of the black swallowtail butterfly. Initially these caterpillars are black with a white saddle, but as they grow, they become light green with yellow-spotted black bands.



### Harvesting

- Dill grown outside will flower and seed about 90 days after planting.
- For maximum flavor, harvest leaves before the flowers open. You can harvest leaves as soon as they are big enough to use. Clip them close to the stem in the early morning or late evening.
- To harvest the seeds, cut the seed heads 2 to 3 weeks after bloom. Place the cuttings in paper bags, hang them upside down, and allow them to dry. The seeds will fall off when they are ready. After this, seeds may need to be dried further before storage.



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-drained



Planting:  
Late  
Feb.-March



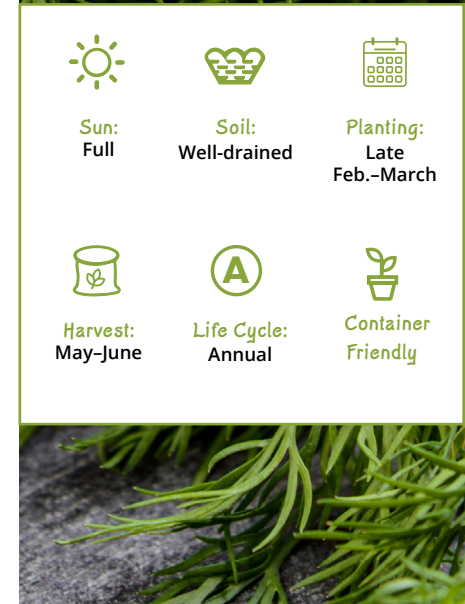
Harvest:  
May-June



Life Cycle:  
Annual



Container  
Friendly



## Buy it

- Choose fresh, bright green sprigs of dill that are free of dark or discolored leaves and signs of mold.

## Store it

- Store fresh dill in the refrigerator. Discard it if it becomes soft, discolored, or has an off-smell.
- Store dried seeds in an airtight container in a cool, dark place. Any sign of moisture accumulating in the container after storage indicates that the seeds are not thoroughly dry.

## Use it

### Greek Meatballs

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

##### Meatballs:

- 1 lb. 93% lean ground turkey
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. oregano, ground
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper, ground
- ¼ cup plain breadcrumbs, dry
- 10 oz. frozen spinach leaves, thawed and drained
- ½ cup reduced fat feta cheese, crumbled

##### Tzatziki Sauce:

- 1 English cucumber
- ½ cup Greek yogurt, plain, nonfat
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup fresh dill, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice



#### Instructions:

Wash your hands and clean your preparation area.

For the tzatziki, use a box grater or food processor to shred the cucumber. Drain any excess liquid.

In a small bowl, combine all tzatziki sauce ingredients. Cover and refrigerate up to 2 hours before serving to allow flavors to meld.

In a large bowl, mix ground turkey, garlic powder, oregano, salt, pepper, and breadcrumbs.

Stirring evenly, add thawed and drained spinach. Then add feta cheese.

Make meatballs using a tablespoon for a perfect measurement.

Warm a skillet or pan to medium heat. Evenly coat with cooking spray and arrange meatballs around the pan.

Cook for 2 to 3 minutes and rotate individually on all sides until browned and cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F.

Serve with tzatziki on the side or as a dip.



## Learn about it

Dill, as well as other herbs, can be used instead of salt to flavor dishes. This is a great way to reduce sodium intake. Additionally, dill contains vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, potassium, and magnesium.<sup>1</sup> However, using dill in small quantities as a flavoring does not provide much nutritional value.

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2022). FoodData Central. Retrieved from: <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>