CILANTRO AND CORIANDER

**DID YOU KNOW?**
The herb cilantro and the spice coriander come from the same plant. Cilantro is the name used for the plant's leaves. Coriander is a spice made from the seeds. The seeds and leaves taste completely different.

**ORIGINS**
Coriander is native to southern Europe and the Mediterranean. It is one of the oldest spices in recorded history, and was used as long as 7,000 years ago.

**CLASSIFYING CILANTRO**

**FAMILY**
Um
(Carrot
In Latin, means u or para to provide shade from the sun.

**GENUS**
Coriandrum means “bed bug” in Greek.

**SPECIES**
sativum means “that which is planted.”

All of the plants in this family have tiny flowers arranged on stalks that radiate from a central point, like the frame of a parasol or umbrella.

**THE CILANTRO PLANT**
The tiny white or pink flowers are arranged in flat-topped clusters.

The upper leaves are feathery.

The lower leaves are fan-like.

The seeds are in ribbed pods.

**GROWING AND HARVESTING CILANTRO AND CORIANDER**
Cilantro is easy to grow in almost any well-drained soil. Sow seeds after the last frost date. Begin harvesting when the plant is at least 15 cm high. If the stems are cut at about 2.5 cm above the ground, the plant will continue to grow.

**USES**
Cilantro is used in Latin American and Southeast Asian salads, soups, and meat dishes. Coriander is used in European, Indian, and Middle Eastern dishes.

I planted cilantro in the shade so it will stay cooler. That way, it won't produce flowers and seeds so quickly, but will keep producing leaves.

Coriander is one of the spices I use in curries.

**CORIANDER**

Coriander has been found in ancient Egyptian tombs.

Some say the fresh leaves smell like bed bugs.

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Across
2. The scientific name for coriander is Coriandrum _______.
3. Coriander and _______ come from the same plant.
6. Cilantro is an _______.
7. The seeds of coriander are in _______ pods.
8. Coriander is a _______.

Down
1. Cilantro belongs to the _______ family.
2. Plant cilantro in the _______ so it will not produce flowers and seeds so quickly.
4. Coriander is one of the _______ spices in recorded history.
5. Plant cilantro seeds after the last _______ date.

Instructions:
1. Cut the kernels from the ears of corn. You should have about 2 cups.
2. Remove the seeds from the red bell pepper and chop.
3. Remove the seeds from the chili pepper and chop.
4. Add the cumin to a medium saucepan. Toast until you just begin to smell it.
5. Add chopped onion, vinegar, sugar, oregano, chili pepper, and salt to the pan, and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Add the bell pepper and the corn and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes.
7. Put the mixture in a container, cover the container, and refrigerate.
8. Just before serving, add minced cilantro.

**QUOTE**

“The children were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.”

from ‘Twas the Night Before Christmas
by Major Henry Livingston Jr.

Sugar-plums are candied coriander, a sweet that was popular in 1822, when this poem was written!

**SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH**

How to keep coriander seeds fresh
Coriander contains chemicals called essential oils. These oils give the coriander spice its distinctive taste and smell. They also are extracted for use in perfumes and medicines. High quality seeds are needed for this purpose.

A researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow wanted to find out how storing coriander under different conditions affects the essential oils. He stored some coriander seeds in the dark and some in the light for one year. Then he analyzed the oil composition of the seeds in the two groups. The oil composition of seeds that were stored in the dark changed only slightly. However, those stored in the light changed a great deal. That means, if you want to keep coriander fresher, store it in the dark, not in the light!