

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginners guide to growing Caraway

When growing an herb garden, some gardeners may not add caraway to their list of plants they plan to plant, but they should. Caraway is a biennial herb that grows best in cooler weather, and it can reach 12 to 24 inches in height. It is a plant with bright, green leaves which grow in a rosette. Caraway has an edible taproot, similar to a parsnip. In its second year of growth, caraway will flower on 2-foot stems. Its flowers will appear as umbrella clusters of white or pink flowers, and the seeds ripen a month after flowering, just before the herb dies.

To plant:

Caraway can be sown in the spring or autumn, and it can even be sown indoors early to transplant outside later on. In the spring, caraway can be sown as early as the soil can be worked, which is approximately the date of the last frost. For starting caraway early, sow it in biodegradable peat pots about 4 weeks before the last frost date. If it is sown in the fall, it will yield early spring plants. If you do start plants indoors, do not completely transplant the plant since it has a main taproot, it doesn't transplant well. This is where biodegradable peat pots come in handy because you can plant the entire pot in the garden. Sow the seeds 1/4 inch deep and thin the successful plants to 18 inches apart. Space rows 18 to 24 inches apart. Since it does have a taproot, Caraway doesn't grow well in containers.

To grow:

Caraway grows best in full sun, but it will tolerate partial shade. It prefers well-draining, sandy soil with a pH between 6.0 and 7.0. Until it is established, water the



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caraway plants regularly. Once the plant flowers, pinch off the flowers so it will grow another year. It may need cold protection if you are growing it in colder areas.

To harvest:

Snip the leaves from spring on to use in meals. Seeds can be harvested during its second year of growth after the plant flowers. If harvesting the seeds, allow them to dry out and turn brown. The leaves are best used fresh. Caraway seeds have a slight anise flavor, and they taste a little bit earthy.

What caraway craves:

Caraway doesn't require a whole lot of fertilizing other than amending the soil with aged compost prior to planting and providing a side dressing of compost in the middle of the growing season.

Where to buy caraway seeds:

You can find caraway seeds at ufseeds.com!



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