



HORSE RADISH

GROWING: This easy to grow, hardy perennial is a member of the mustard family. It thrives in full sun but tolerates light shade. Almost any soil will do except consistently waterlogged conditions. Horseradish needs little or no attention. It can help to water it once a week during dry spells and use a couple of inches of mulch around the plant to help conserve moisture. Don't till up ground containing horseradish root or place roots in your compost pile, because you risk spreading the plant all over the garden. The best time to harvest is after frost kills the foliage. I dig mine up completely each season and replant a small piece to prevent it spreading too far.

PREPARATION: Remove the leaves and scrub the root under running water and dry well. If enclosed in a perforated plastic bag, horseradish root will keep in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator for three months or even longer. Freshly grated horseradish emits fumes that irritate your eyes and nose, worse than onions, so prepare it in a well-ventilated area or even outside. First, peel a 3- to 4-inch section of root as you would a carrot (I don't do this unless the skin looks like it needs it). Cut it into half-inch chunks and drop them in a blender or food processor. Have white vinegar ready (or white-wine or rice-wine vinegar). Process for 2 minutes (or longer if you want it hot, 3 or so minutes), then pour in vinegar to barely cover and continue to process until the desired texture. Vinegar stops the enzyme action caused when with the breakdown of the root, thus stopping the heat. I froze mine in small containers, and it will keep for a period of time in the fridge. Dilute the mixture with water if it is too hot, and/or season with salt.