Manual Leek Planter
Instruction Sheet

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Leeks are a reliable, popular, and relatively easy crop to grow. Leeks with long, bright white shanks are regarded as a premium-quality product with high marketability.

The Manual Leek Planter makes holes that are approximately 9” deep for transplants. The desirability of long, blanched shanks is the primary reason for burying leek seedlings at the transplant stage of growth. Two additional reasons are that hilling of the crop becomes less necessary with this technique and the crop can be spaced more intensively, in 3 rows over 30”-wide (75cm) beds.

Specs for Intensive Spacing
Each bed is comprised of 3 rows, uniformly spaced at 9” (30cm), with in-row spacing of 6” (15cm).

The Manual Leek Planter has adjustable row markers for marking out where to make the next row of holes. We recommend in-row spacing of 6” (15cm), but row markers can be set to mark in-row spacing anywhere in the 4”–8” range.

Succession Harvest
The source supplier plants summer and fall leek varieties that have different maturity dates at the same time, then harvest in succession. (For specifics, refer to our Leek Planting/Harvesting Program.)

Seeding Flats
Start leeks approximately 6 weeks before the targeted transplant date to grow pencil-thick transplants. Sow seeds 1/4”–1/2” apart in rows spaced 3” apart into standard 1020 trays with drainage holes to allow adequate room for root development.

Site Selection & Bed Preparation
Leeks perform best in a fertile, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.2–6.8. Sandy loam soils are ideal; with heavier soils, raised beds or raised rows are recommended to promote soil drainage. Full sun is required for optimal growth; avoid planting leeks adjacent to crops that will shade them.

Prepare a loose, even bed for transplanting. Use a rake to clean out debris and a broadfork if needed. Add compost and other amendments as needed to the soil prior to planting. Test soil regularly to determine the necessary amendments and their application rates. To make transplanting easier, we prepare the beds shortly before we are about to transplant.



Well-blanched leek shanks greatly enhance the crop's tenderness and kitchen-readiness, and thus marketability. Three rows of 9½”-deep dibbles are evenly spaced at 9” for intensively growing leeks. Designed for a 30”-wide bed system.

Transplanting
Pass with the manual leek planter to mark the planting holes. If the holes tend to crumble, water the bed surface first with your irrigation system. The success of the technique lies in making perfect long, hollow holes for the leeks to grow into.

Once the holes are ready, bring out the well-watered trays from the nursery and remove the leek seedlings from them. They’ll be planted bare root.

Using scissors, trim the roots to 1” (2.5cm) in length. To have uniform seedlings, also trim their tops at about 10” (25cm) in length. (Leeks less than 8” in length (20cm) are not ready for transplanting. They will not poke out of the holes in the ground if they are too short.)

Drop each leek seedling into a hole so the roots reach the bottom. More than 1” (2.5cm) of the top should protrude above the ground.

Water over the newly transplanted leeks so that some surface soil spills down into holes, providing good root-to-soil contact.

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