

Cucumber

Planting & Growing Guide

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Cucumbers are a favorite summer garden vegetable to grow for most home gardeners. They are not difficult to grow but thrive in the heat of summer.

CUCUMBER TYPES

Armenian: “snake cucumber”, extra long, thin skin, mild flavor, crunchy, and are not bitter. Skins are light green color or a striped light and dark green color.

Burpless: varieties reported to be slightly less bitter even when grown in conditions that may cause bitterness (excessive heat and or drought conditions)

English: “hothouse”, mild, thin, smooth skin, low seed count

Gherkin: small; bumpy skin, variety for pickles

Asian: slender; tiny bumps on slender dark green thin skin,

Lemon: pale yellow, round, delicate flavor, crisp, picked at lemon size, not bitter

Persian: similar to English, mild, various lengths

GROWING BASICS

Soil: Cucumbers prefer a soil pH between 5.5 to 7 and temperatures of 70–80°F (for germination will need 80–95°F).

Seed longevity: if properly stored, the seeds should be viable for at least 5 years.

Spacing: 2 to 3 feet minimum

Companion planting:

Incompatibility – herbs other than dill and oregano, melons, potatoes.
Companions – radish, oregano, dill, peas, beets, corn, carrots.

Water requirements: moderate until flower; heavy flower to harvest.
Avoid overhead watering, best to use drip irrigation.

Fertilization: Address amendments prior to transplanting into garden; supplement per product label. Cucumbers are heavy nitrogen feeders; pale leaves indicates nitrogen deficiency and leaf bronzing is a sign of potassium deficiency.

PLANTING & GROWING

Due to tender nature, can start indoors 3 weeks before last frost date.

Sowing: Indoors start about 3 weeks before last frost. Sow about ½–1” deep in damp soilless mix (**Quickroot**) to prevent damping off and facilitate easy emergence. Moisten with sprayer or mister. Cover with a dome (optional) to prevent drying out and use a heat mat to provide sufficient warmth. Maintain soil as just moist (overwatering will displace or degrade seed). Place in a 65–75°F area with very good light or under grow lights.

Can be direct sown when soil has warmed to at least 65°F. Germination will take longer if soil is not warm enough (at least 65°F) and will not germinate at all if less than 50°F.

After first set of true leaves form, begin to supplement with half dilution of hydrolyzed fish and kelp every 14 days. Before transplanting to garden, place plants in a sheltered area outdoors during day and bring in at night to harden off.

Transplanting: Wait until night temperatures stay above 60°F and plants are hardened off. Work soil well and amend per soil report recommendations or add ½ cup balanced vegetable fertilizer in perimeter. Space 2–4’ apart in well-drained soil with sufficient depth for roots and in an area that has full sun.

Water lightly to settle soil. Best to grow on a trellis (results in better air circulation and straighter fruit). Can apply mulch (silver film or green film) to increase soil temperature. Prepare for frost protection if nights are forecast to drop below 45°F.

HARVESTING

Pick when large enough to use and before yellowing, which indicates it is past prime. Younger fruits are usually less bitter with smaller seeds. Keep plants picked to encourage continued fruiting.

COMMON PESTS & DISEASES

Powdery Mildew: to reduce incidence of disease avoid overhead watering and crowding. Helps to grow plants on a trellis to improve air circulation. Use an organic fungicide labeled to control powdery mildew.

Mosaic: Various forms of virus create stunted fruit and/or low yields. Leaves may be mottled and die back. Control pest vectors such as beetles and aphids.

Ringspot: Various forms of virus create similar leaf mottling and desiccation as mosaic, and ringspots on discolored fruits. Continual reduction in grasses and weeds reduces disease vectors.

Bacterial Wilt: leaves appear wilted and die. Transmitted by cucumber beetles. Remove the plant if infected and control cucumber beetles to prevent further spread.

Scab: avoid overhead watering and crowding, grow on a trellis to improve air circulation.

Aphids: usually found on the underside of leaves or on flower head. Control by strong spray of water, beneficial insects, or organic insecticides labeled for aphids.

Striped or Spotted Cucumber Beetles: can spread disease. Can use sticky traps, hand pick or use organic insecticides labeled for cucumber beetles.

Spider Mites: Use beneficial insects, or organic miticides labeled for spider mites.

Pickleworm: Control with insecticides labeled for pickleworms, rowcovers, *Steinernema carpocapsae* nematodes.

Slugs and Snails: Diatomaceous earth, Sluggo Plus, wood ash, traps, or copper barriers.

Thrips: Use beneficial insects, sticky traps or organic insecticides labeled for thrips.

Whiteflies: usually found on the underside of leaves. Control by strong spray of water, beneficial insects, or organic insecticides labeled for whiteflies.

PEST CONTROL - IPM

Important to practice good cultural controls for pest management of cucumbers. Cultural controls such as removing plants after harvest (to avoid leaving food for insects to continue to multiply on), practice crop rotation (i.e. do not plant crops in same family, in the same area for 3 years), use row covers such as Agribon AG15 (apply before insects arrive or to protect against birds when plants are young).

COMMON QUESTIONS

When to harvest? As cukes mature they become yellow and seeds get larger, so best to harvest young and when skins are still richly colored. Take note of size of variety and what is common.

Why does my vine periodically stop producing from the flowers? Heat is usually the culprit in the summer. High heats for extended periods of time will hinder many types of vegetable until the stress factor is alleviated.

DEFINITIONS

Heirloom: Heirloom seeds come from open-pollinated plants that pass on similar characteristics and traits from the parent plant to the next generation plant. Heirloom vegetables are old-time varieties generally which have been in production since before WWII, and have been saved and handed down through multiple generations.

Hybrid: a cross between two or more unrelated plant varieties. The two different varieties are cross bred, resulting in a seed that carries one or more favorable traits (increased yield, uniformity, color, disease resistance.) Hybrid seeds are not GMO, as they are manually cross-bred, not genetically modified in a lab. Hybrid seed is often sterile or does not reproduce true to the parent plant. Therefore, never save the seed from hybrids.

Open Pollinated: generally refers to seeds that will "breed true". When the plants of an open-pollinated variety self-pollinate, or are pollinated by another representative of the same variety, the resulting seeds will produce plants roughly identical to their parents. Genetic traits may differ only slightly due to variations created by local conditions.

GMO: Genetically Modified Organisms were genetically modified in a laboratory where DNA genes are extracted and mixed with other unrelated plants to improve characteristics. Saved seed will not always be viable and may be trademarked to prevent unauthorized use.

Limited Product Guarantees

Peaceful Valley Brand Seed Packs

Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply brand vegetable seeds are guaranteed to germinate. Once the seeds have sprouted, please understand that Peaceful Valley cannot be held responsible for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions that must be met to ensure the success of your crop(s).

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We warrant to the extent of the purchase price only that the seeds or plants sold hereunder are as described on the label within recognized tolerances. No other warranty is given, expressed or implied, of (1) the merchantability or fitness of the seeds or plants for any particular purpose, or (2) against loss due to any cause. We cannot accept any responsibility for the many uncontrollable growing and climatic conditions (soil preparation, fertilization, weed and pest control, temperature control, irrigation...etc.) that must be met to insure the success of your crop(s) or plants.



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