

Vegetable Crops A to Z

Compiled by Terry Mikel and Jeff Schalau

Asparagus

No harvest the first year, provide lots of nitrogen to promote growth, second year harvest spears until they are the diameter of a pencil, then allow the rest to grow for the season. Cut down and remove after frost has killed tops.

Beans

Plant pole beans six inches apart, 'Kentucky Wonder' is a favorite pole bean. If you must grow a bush bean, go with 'Contender'.

Beets

Beet seeds are in capsules, soak prior to planting, lots of varieties, thin plants to every 8 inches for maximum size.

Broccoli/Cauliflower

Lots of sun and space, light sensitive and will lean, many good varieties, yellow cauliflower is best, aphids and cabbage loopers are pests, use floating row cover to protect.

Brussels Sprouts

Plant seeds and pull leaves off as it grows to form best sprouts – interesting plant to grow.

Cabbage

Grow varieties not found in stores – needs lots of space.

Carrots

Sow seed in large bed or wide rows, thin plants to 2 inches apart, splitting caused by water stress, can hold them in the ground in fall – winter. Many varieties.

Chard

Resists bolting better than some other greens (red especially), plant a mix

Corn

You can buy corn from local sources, pollination requires a block rather than a long row, many sweet and super sweet varieties, Terry's favorite is 'Butter and Cream' (two ears per plant and corn borer seems to be less problematic), corn borer and earworms are common pests, 1 foot spacing minimum.

Cucumbers

All varieties are worth growing, they can be trained to climb, water stress makes many varieties bitter (cucurbitacin), picklers have black spines, slicers have white spines.

Dill

Dill and fennel will cross, you only need to plant it once and it will continue to come up forever.

Eggplant

Loves hot weather, European can be bitter unless very ripe, Asian vars. have less bitterness.

Endive

Store-bought is blanched – requires labor, nice to grow.

Garlic

Many varieties. Plant in Fall (Sept.), do not use sulfur because it makes it hotter, harvest in June.

Horseradish

Can be grown here – severe irritant.

Kale

May be planted 2-3 weeks before the last frost-free date, sidedress with nitrogen after 4 weeks.

Lettuce

Grow leaf lettuce, it's easy to grow, some heat tolerant vars. Head lettuce uses lots of P. Sow seeds shallow as they are very small. Bolting is related to day length.

Melons

Don't grow regular cantelopes – look at muskmelons and other unique varieties that cannot be shipped. All melons – "roll the vines" by placing them back over themselves after 2-4 golfball sized melons appear.

Vegetable Crops A to Z (cont.)

Onions

Plant sets if available, use short day (day neutral) onions to produce bulbs. Sweet Grano (1033Y) and Granex (1015Y) are good sweet varieties. Avoid sulfur because it makes them hot.

Peas

Best to grow edible pod varieties, use appropriate Rhizobium inoculum for peas.

Peanuts

Three classes: Virginia, Valencia, and Spanish. Grow Virginia. Plant raw nut with integument intact. Everyone needs to do this once. Flowers bloom, pollenate, then it forms a peg that grows into the soil where the peanut forms. Harvest after freeze and air dry.

Pepper/Chiles

Many varieties that all seem to do pretty well here. Peppers have superior ovaries and chiles have inferior ovaries (referring to the whether or not the petals are attached above (superior) or below (inferior) the ovary). Sulfur improves production in alkaline soils.

Potatoes (Irish)

Buy seed potatoes to minimize disease, many varieties – grow the unusual ones, plant deep and backfill as they grow to maximize the amount of buried stem.

Pumpkins

Need lots of space, pie types and white varieties are best for baking.

Tomatoes

Allowing to sprawl on ground will make more tomatoes, but some will rot. Trellis will prevent rot but grows fewer fruit. Fruit set diminishes above 90 degrees F. Tomatoes self pollenate so seed saving is easy on non-hybrid varieties. Blossom Set product works at low temperatures (55-85 degrees F). Bees “sonicate” (vibration of wings w/o flight) which releases pollen. Terry’s favorite is ‘Pearson’s Improved’.