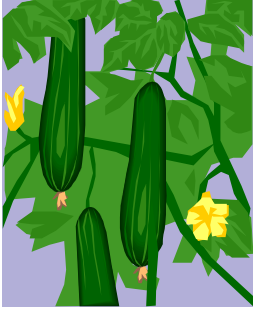


Cucumber



Cucumis sativus

Cucumbers are best when eaten raw or pickled. Fast maturing in warm weather, they'll trail and climb along any given trellis. Bush and compact varieties are great in containers. Cucumbers are very sensitive to frost, so seeds or transplants should be set outdoors when soil temperatures are in the 60s.

SITE REQUIREMENTS

Cucumbers require full sun, at least 6 hours of direct sun, and rich, well-drained soil. Prepare the planting area by mixing 3-4" of composted manure and lime into the top 6-10" of the soil. Mix in an all-purpose granular fertilizer in the bottom of each planting hole.

PLANTING

Cucumbers thrive in warm weather and is best planted outdoors end of May through the first week of July when soil temperatures are in the 60s or above. Space groups of seeds 3-4' apart in hills or raised beds. Sow 4-6 seeds ½" deep and cover seeds with a thin layer of soil. Once seeds have germinated, pinch off the weakest ones so you are left with the strongest one or two.

You can start seeds indoors in May, 3 weeks before desired transplanting date. It is recommended to start seeds indoors in pots which can be planted in the directly ground, because cucumbers do not like roots disturbance. Water in with a diluted liquid seaweed or B1.

Keep new beds well weeded and slightly moist. You can cover new plantings with floating row cover to prevent cucumber beetles and other insects. Remove row covers when plants begin to flower. Plastic or organic mulches can help heat the soil and retain moisture. It also helps to trellis your cucumbers to save space and prevent diseases. You can extend your harvest season by putting in your first planting in late may and your second planting 4 weeks later in June.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

How much water your plants will require depends on the soil and weather. Cucumbers want average, evenly moist watering during the growing phase. Once they begin to flower and set fruit they need heavy watering, water deeply when the top 2" of the soil is dry, to allow for even and tasty fruit development. Cucumbers are more than 90% water, and water stressed fruit will be bitter and/or have skinny portions. Drip irrigation is the best way to provide even moisture and while having fewer disease issues.

FERTILIZING

Cucumbers are heavy feeders. Don't forget to mix an all-purpose granular fertilizer into the bottom of each hole before planting. Side dress plants after 3 weeks with composted manure or all-purpose granular fertilizer.

HARVESTING & STORAGE

Cucumbers are ready to harvest when the flower drops off the end of the fruit. It is important to keep picking your cucumbers (may be daily in warm weather) to maximize production. Generally pickling cucumbers are picked at 2-6" long and slicing cucumbers at 6-10" long.

PESTS & DISEASES

Good gardening practices such as crop rotation, drip irrigation, proper planting time, floating row covers and removal of entire plants when harvest is done all help prevent many pest and disease challenges.

*Flowers may not form fruit for a variety of reasons. Most cucumbers have separate male and female flowers. Often the first flush of flowers is only males. Other times you may have female flowers with tiny fruit that never develop and fall off. In this case lack of pollination is the issue. Cool cloudy weather can also deter pollinating insects from visiting your plants. Hand pollinate with a paint brush to help fruit set. A few varieties require a second, different variety for pollination. Orient Express and Cool Breeze are two varieties that require a pollinator.

*Anthracnose appears as yellow and brown spots on leaves coupled with dark streaks on stems. It is a fungal disease that can be controlled with serenade and copper sprays.

*Angular leaf spot appears as geometric yellow and/or brown leaf spots which eventually leave holes. It is a bacteria spread by splashing rain. Remove infected areas, avoid overhead irrigation and use plastic mulches to prevent infection.

*Bacterial wilt is a virus which causes leaves or the whole plant to wilt. Cut stems will exude a thick ooze. There is no cure, but using floating row covers help prevent cucumber beetles which transmit the virus.

*Cucumber Mosaic virus appears as yellow, mottled, curling leaves. As with other viral diseases there is no cure, and infected plants should be removed and destroyed.

*Downy Mildew appears as splotches of angular yellow or brown spots that are purplish on the underside. Infected leaves should be removed. Spread of the infection may be controlled with Serenade.

*Powdery mildew will occur on all cucurbit crops at some point in the season. It may first appear as powdery white spots on leaves and stems or coat entire leaves. The fungus spreads in warm, dry weather. Pick off infected areas and spray with copper or serenade to prevent the spread of the fungus.

*Cucumber beetles may chew seedlings or leave a lacy pattern in leaves of larger plants. They transmit bacterial wilt. Use floating row covers crop until flowering begins. Beneficial nematodes can kill the larvae, lacewings and ladybugs will eat eggs, and rotenone and pyrethrin can help control populations.

*Melon aphids cause leaves to curl, distort and turn yellow. Usually white aphid skeletons colonies of apple green bugs are visible on the growing tips and underside of leaves. There are numerous control methods to control aphids such as ladybugs and insecticidal soap.

VARIETIES

Slicing

*Burpless- 70 days. Very productive with 12" long slender fruit. Very mild flavor. Spreads 5-6 ft.

*Burpless Bush- 60 days. Disease resistant. Low-acid, straight, 10-12" long, cylindrical fruit. Firm and nearly seedless when ready for harvest. Great for containers.

*Marketmore 76-55 days. Non fading, 8" long 2" round fruits. Bitter free, burpless and great disease resistance.

*Slicing- 65 days. A good all around variety with 8" long fruits. Vigorous.

*Straigh Eight- 63 days. An heirloom, smooth skinned variety with 6-8" fruits.

*Sweet Success- Truly seedless cucumber. Slender, 14" fruit with thin, smooth skin. Superb flavor, no bitterness. Resists cucumber mosaic virus, scab, & target leaf spot.

English

*Diva- 58 days. Plant produces good yields of non-bitter burpless and seedless glossy dark green cucumbers. Will produce without pollination! Excellent for salads or pickling. Disease resistant.

*English Telegraph- Superb flavor. 45 days. 15"-18" long, straight, dark green fruit. Will curl if not grown on stake or fence. This variety is not bitter, features very few seeds and makes excellent eating.

Asian

*Orient Express- 64 days. Produces 14" long, thin cukes with a smooth skin. Crisp, succulent and burpless. Requires a different variety for pollination. Spreads 5-6 ft.

*Suyo Long- 60 days. Traditional, 15" long, variety from China. Slender and ribbed. Burpless, not bitter. Great for salads and mixed vegetable pickles.

Pickling

*Bush Pickle- 48 days. Compact plants, 3-4' hwx. Straight, cylindrical, 4-5" long fruit. Good pickling cucumber.

*Cool Breeze- 45 days. Fine-spined, smooth skin covers crisp, sweet, seedless, burpless fruit that is harvestable at 4-5". Disease resistant. Requires a second variety for pollination.

*Pickling- 53 days. Medium green, 12" long fruits. Heavy yielding; matures in 53 days. Disease resistant.

Novelty

*Armenian Yard Long- 65 days. 12-15" long, slender fruits on 5' vines. Fruit is actually a ribbed melon w/cucumber look & taste. Trellis for straighter fruit. Easy to digest, not bitter. Slicing

*Lemon- Heirloom. 58-65 days. Small, slightly rounded fruit has pale yellow skin and juicy, lemon-flavored white flesh. Mild flavor.

Pickling/Slicing.

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