

How to Grow Cucumbers



Cucumbers, commonly called "cukes", are a favorite garden vegetable. Most gardeners grow at least one variety, if not more. Although quite susceptible to insect and disease problems, they are easy to grow. They are also prolific producers. Cucumbers are vining plants, members of the Cucurbita family which includes pumpkins, squash, and gourds. They grow best when allowed to sprawl along the ground in your garden. This is because secondary roots will develop along the vine at the junction between the vine and the leaf. Secondary roots are a source of additional nutrients for your plant and fruits' growth. If you have limited space, cucumbers are very successfully grown in a small space by training them up a fence or trellis. If a trellis or fence is your only choice, go for it. You will not be disappointed. Fresh cucumbers are great on vegetable trays with dip, sliced or in salads.

Days to Maturity: 55 to 65 days. Once cucumbers begin to ripen, you can usually harvest them for several weeks.

Sowing Cucumber Seeds: Plant in rows or hills, planting them one to 1 1/2 inches deep. When planting in rows, sow seeds 2 to 3" apart. If you are planting in hills, plant four to five per hill. After they have germinated, keep the best two to three. Cover very lightly with soil. Water the first day and if there is no rain, every two to three days until they germinate.

Growing Cucumbers: Cucumber plants require well drained soil. Like other members of the cucurbita family, they are big eaters. Provide plenty of fertilize high in nitrogen. Switch over to a more balanced fertilizer, after the flowers begin to bloom. A side dressing of fertilizer and regular feedings of fertilizer will significantly help the health of the plant and the size of the harvest. Also make sure to provide lots of water to for fast growth.

Tip: Cucumbers grow quickly and are at their best when picked before they get too big. Encourage new fruit development by picking regularly. Do not allow them to get overripe on the vine or they will slow down, if not cease bearing new fruit.

Hardiness: Cucumbers are susceptible to spring and fall frost. They grow best in temperatures between 60 to 80 degrees.