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Thursday, May 1, 2025



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How to Grow Ginger Plants: The Complete Guide to Ginger Root



Photo Credit: Bigc/Shutterstock

Botanical name:
Zingiber officinale

Plant type:
[Herb](#)

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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Ginger

By [Andy Wilcox](#)

Last Updated: April 18, 2025



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Ginger: The spice that kicks up food flavors and keeps your taste buds dancing! Ginger is exceptionally flavorful when grown in the home garden. Plus, you plant once and harvest for years! This delicious spice is not only wonderful in recipes but also has medicinal benefits. Discover how to plant, grow, and harvest ginger root.

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About Ginger

Ginger, *Zingiber officinale*, is a flowering plant that grows by chunky spreading roots called rhizomes. It is an herbaceous perennial that can be grown outside in USDA Zone 9 to 11 if temperatures do not fall to or below 32°F (0°C). Fortunately, the rest of us can grow in containers or dig up the rhizomes before the frost.

A stately plant, a few stands of ginger will look good on your patio or in your garden as well. Reaching 3 to 4 feet tall, the rhizome clump will typically spread 1 to 2 feet wide. The aboveground portion of the plant looks like thick-stemmed grass, and

most commonly used. The flowers have pale yellow petals with purple edges.

Ginger is a tropical plant native to Asia's hot, equatorial areas, and it has a long history in Asian cooking and herbal medicine (at least 4,400 years!). Ginger was traded at great expense along the Silk Road throughout the Middle Ages; in the 14th century, a pound of ginger was worth as much as a whole sheep. Ginger was the first foreign spice to be grown in the New World (in 1585).

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Ginger grown in the home garden in non-

mature roots available at the grocery store. Because of the thinner skin, home-grown ginger doesn't need to be peeled before use, with the trade-off being that it won't last as long on the shelf and should be preserved.

Read Next

- [How to Grow Salsify: The Complete Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Balloon Flowers: The Complete Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Lemongrass: The Complete Plant Guide](#)

PLANTING

Ginger will do better the closer you can come to replicating its natural tropical home. Warm temperatures in the 70° to 90°F (21° to 32°C) range, moisture, rich and loamy soil, and a little dappled shade make ginger happiest. It should be planted with protection from strong winds. Also, ginger cannot tolerate standing water or completely drying out.

lucky. Plant it under the shelter of a taller crop like your hothouse tomatoes to give it a break from the intense sun. [See how to grow ginger indoors.](#)

Ginger can also be grown well in large containers and is particularly suited to grow bags. The rhizomes grow wide rather than deep, so a container with a large diameter is required—at least 12 inches wide for a single plant.

Whether in the ground or container, ginger loves soil rich in organic matter. A peat and wood bark-based, soilless medium with a little sand mixed in will support container plants. In the ground, add lots of compost. Organic fertilizers and worm castings are also good choices.

When to Plant Ginger

Plant ginger in spring as soon as nighttime temperatures are above 55°F (13°C). For direct planting of rhizomes in the garden, soil temperatures should be warmer

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It does take about 8 to 10 months for ginger to mature, although the rhizomes can be harvested at any time after they start to form. To maximize your growing time, you can also pre-sprout ginger indoors in late winter.

How to Plant Ginger

To grow your own ginger, purchase fresh ginger rhizomes from a plant nursery or seed company source. Grocery store ginger is often treated with a sprout inhibitor, so if you try ginger from the grocery store, go with organic ginger. Or, try

card the water. Look for firm, large plump rhizomes with no shriveling or mold; they should feel heavy for their size.

Like potatoes, ginger rhizomes have eyes or buds, and rhizomes can be planted whole or cut into pieces, each with a bud. While you can cut the pieces as small as an inch or two, the larger the rhizome, the quicker it will grow, and the larger the plant will be, yielding a bigger harvest later. Use a larger rhizome and several buds if you only have room for one or two plants.

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Growing ginger in a container.

Credit: Alla Sravani

To pre-sprout ginger indoors:

1. Prepare a tray with moist compost several inches deep.
2. Cut or break the ginger rhizomes into the size pieces you wish to plant, ensuring each has at least one bud. Allowing the ginger to sit on the counter for a day to callus over can help prevent root rot.
3. Lay the ginger pieces, buds up, on the surface, and then cover with another 1–2 inches of compost, firming up around the roots. Water until moist but not soggy.
4. Cover with a humidity dome and place in a warm spot. A heating mat underneath can speed sprouting.
5. When the rhizomes have popped up green sprouts, place them

6. Repot into individual containers to continue growing until ready to plant outside.

Plant ginger outside:

1. Work compost into the bed and loosen the soil.
2. For rhizomes, dig a trench that's 6 inches deep and lay rhizomes, eyes up, in the trench about 8–12 inches apart. Cover with an inch of soil.
3. For sprouted plants, don't forget to harden them off first. Then, plant the same as the rhizomes in a trench, but plant them with the original rhizome 2–3 inches deep.
4. Water well.
5. Once the sprouts are a few inches tall, apply mulch to keep the soil near the surface from drying out and suppress weeds. A 2-inch layer of natural mulch will make a big difference.

If you keep them in containers throughout the summer, place ginger plants outside when the nights are warmer or move

ing them around to adjust to the changing sunlight as summer progresses.

Video: How to Grow Ginger at Home

!Ginger Masterclass: Plant Once, Harvest Forever



GROWING

- Go easy on the watering while waiting for ginger to sprout or the rhizome could rot.
- But once ginger starts growing, it needs regular watering as it's used to regular rain showers in its native climate.
- Plan to water in the morning. The soil should be evenly and slightly moist

other garden plants—every day in warm weather. Note, however, that ginger doesn't like to sit in sopping wet soil for long periods of time.

- As the ginger grows, fill the trench a little, covering the pink new rhizomes like hilling potatoes. Don't worry if this gets away from you. It isn't strictly necessary but will encourage more rhizomes to grow.
- Mulch around your ginger to keep weeds down and encourage healthy soil conditions. [Read more about using mulch.](#)
- Ginger can benefit from some extra feeding. You could mix a slow-release fertilizer or use an occasional liquid seaweed feed throughout the growing season.
- Hand pull any weeds. You don't want to damage those tasty rhizomes.

HARVESTING

Ginger will start to slow down and not make new leaves in late summer. Any time

You can sneak a little pre-harvest in by gently digging around the base and snapping off or cutting a piece. While the entire crop may take 8 to 10 months, you can harvest earlier if autumn encroaches on your growing season.

- Pull up the entire plant, rhizomes and all. Loosening underneath with a garden fork may be helpful, but use caution.
- Snip the tops off and wash the ginger free of dirt. The skins are tender, so don't get too frisky.
- Any damaged roots should be used first. Homegrown ginger won't store as long as store-bought stuff with thicker skins.
- Break a good chunk of the ginger root to replant and continue growing for the next crop. This way, you can keep your ginger going indefinitely.

Storing Ginger

- Always store fresh ginger in your refrigerator in a paper bag in the crisper

fridge for up to 3 weeks and peeled in the freezer for up to 6 months.

- If you have too much ginger, you can freeze the ginger (in chunks); it's easier to grate ginger once it's frozen, and you can just take out a chunk at a time.
- Freshly grated ginger can be frozen in ice cubes; grate with a microplane or process in a blender to the desired consistency. Add to recipes frozen.
- Or you can thinly slice the ginger root, dehydrate it until crisp, and use a spice grinder to make your own ground ginger. Dried ginger root should always be stored in your pantry.

Overwintering Ginger Plants

As temperatures cool, bring any potted ginger inside; this tropical plant will turn to mush below 40° F (5°C). Place it on a sunny windowsill or at least a bright one. Keep away from drying radiators.

Sit the pot in a tray or saucer filled with pebbles and water—gingers like humidity and should not dry out. As the daylight

longer a threat, the plant can be moved
back into a greenhouse or outside if you
get nice warm summers. You can also
[grow ginger indoors!](#)

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PESTS/DISEASES

- **Bacterial wilt**
- **Rhizome rot** due to *Pythium* spp.

WIT AND WISDOM

- Ginger has active ingredients called gingerols and is effective in reducing nausea. It has been a staple in Eastern medicine (and cuisine) for thousands of years. Nibbling on crystalized ginger is a tasty way for treatment.
- Dry your ginger at home and grind it yourself, but beware—dried ginger is much more potent than fresh.

RECIPES

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COOKING NOTES

- Ginger is a common cooking spice, used in teas, [ginger ale](#), [ginger cider](#), [gingerbread](#), and ginger snaps. It's also a medicinal ingredient found in capsules, soaps, extracts, and tinctures.
- Fresh ginger may be grated, sliced, or minced, as well as crystalized, candied, and pickled. Powdered dried ginger is the form most often used in baking.
- Recipes calling for a knob of ginger typically mean a 2-inch piece, whereas a thumb of ginger generally means a 1-inch piece.
- When peeling ginger, use a spoon—not a knife—to scrape off the outer skin.

vor or near the end for a fuller more pungent flavor.

- Pickle fresh ginger by simply slicing peeled fresh ginger into thin slices (using a vegetable peeler) and place in equal parts vinegar and sugar (or, to taste). Store in the fridge up to 2 months.

HERBS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Wilcox



Andy Wilcox is a flower farmer and master gardener with a passion for soil health, small producers, forestry, and horticulture.

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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Sue (not verified) 2 months 3 weeks ago

You can store ginger pretty much forever by peeling and submerging it in vodka. (I broke it into a usable size, not too big, not too small.) It is always at the ready and...the vodka can be added to your ginger ale for a little kick! The alcohol is removed in the cooking process.

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REPLY

Suzanne (not verified) 5 months 3 weeks ago

I adore YOU! Thank you for all that you do to teach & share with us. I bought organic ginger at Costco, so I have many roots. I live NW of Austin TX am excited to start growing my ginger and the tip of freezing prior to shredding is fantastic. Thank you again!

REPLY

Spinnin Jenny (not verified) 5 months 3 weeks ago

I've grown ginger for several years in large plastic pots on the northern side of Atlanta Georgia. I always wear gloves because I have sensitive skin. One day, I wasn't wearing gloves and plucked a couple of weeds out of that ginger pot. Soon afterwards, my skin started to burn and was very painful. I didn't know what was causing this. I searched online and found the answer. I had brushed the leaves with my bare hand. The ginger leaves have a substance that's a protects against predators. So, now I never work around the ginger pot without gloves!!

REPLY

Stacy (not verified) 9 months ago

This is my second year growing ginger and I love it! I grow mine in huge pots outdoors under some roma tomato plants in direct sunlight. Next year I may move them to the tubs in a more shaded area of the garden. Thanks for the tips and tricks, now I know better. Love the

REPLY

Cindy (not verified) 1 year 2 months ago

Why can't I save these articles on ginger to Pinterest?

REPLY

Amy O'Brien 1 year 2 months ago

Unfortunately, we had to block using Pinterest on our site because they were breaking our web pages.

Hopefully, they will find a fix for this in the future and we will be able to reinstate saving articles to Pinterest.

Apologies for the inconvenience. -
Almanac.com Technical Support

REPLY

Patricia (not verified) 1 year 9 months ago

Your first photo is turmeric and the second one

REPLY

Anne (not verified)5 months 3 weeks ago

both Ginger (Zingiber officinale)

Turmeric and Galangal are in the

Ginger family;

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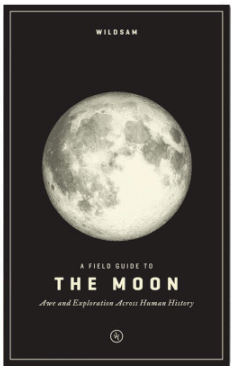
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