

PLANTING GUIDE FOR EGGPLANT

The eggplant originally comes from Asia and India, where it is widely used in local cuisines. It belongs to the Solanaceae family together with nightshade vegetables like potatoes, peppers and tomatoes. It is usually purple in color with a rich, meaty inside that becomes creamy in consistency when you cook it. It is a popular choice for vegans as it makes a good substitute for meat dishes.

Here are some guidelines on how to grow eggplants:

- A. Purchase eggplant seeds and plant them indoors at least 6-9 weeks before the last frost date is expected when the weather is warm enough.
- B. Soak the seeds overnight. Eggplant seeds' chances of growing successfully increase when they are completely soaked before planting. Put them in small container and submerge them in water. After soaking overnight, drain the water.
- C. Fill seed trays with a compost of your choice whether vermiculite, perlite, coconut husk etc.
- D. Plant the seeds 1/4 inch deep and moisten the compost.
- E. Let the seeds germinate for 5-14 days in a place where temperature is around 18°C.
- F. As soon as the seedlings reach 3 inches tall, you can transplant seedlings into individual pots. Fill them with the same compost used when they were still seedlings and gently place each seedlings into the pot.



Select Outdoor Location

- A. Eggplants require plenty of sunlight to thrive preferably a location that can receive 6 hours of sunlight.
- B. Ensure a well-drained soil by doing a simple soil test.
- C. If the soil is poorly drained, try adding organic soil amendment materials such as sand, vermiculite, perlite or compost.

Planting Eggplant Seedlings

- A. Plant seedlings 24-30 inches apart, root deep.
- B. Place mulch around the base of your plants to prevent weeds from cropping up and keeping soil moisture in.
- C. Prepare stakes to hold up your plants and insert them into the soil about 1-2 inches away from each seedling. Once the plants grow, they will lean onto the stakes instead of crawling to other plants.

Eggplant Care

- A. Water the eggplant at least once a week.
- B. Check for flea beetles or other pests on plant leaves and remove them by hand.
- C. Use row covers to protect your eggplants to protect from pests, cold weather and other diseases. You may purchase them at local garden centres or online shops.
- D. Around 4-5 months after planting the eggplants, the skin will start to be glossy which means it's ripe for harvesting. Use sharp pruning shears to cut off eggplants near the stem.
- E. Eggplants can be stored in refrigerator and will remain fresh for at most 2 weeks.



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