

Guide to Growing Vegetables from Seed

kernels off the ears with your thumbs. If this is too difficult, use a corn sheller and winnow away debris.

Cucumbers *Cucumis sativus*

Growing Needs: Annual, full sun, loamy soil.

Cucumbers are an easy to grow warm weather veggie, with slicing varieties a delicate addition to salads and refreshing drinks, as well as pickling varieties for making those tasty dill and sweet pickles. Because they can climb, most varieties will grow in whatever space you have available if you provide them a trellis. The most common varieties grow on vigorous vines with large leaves. Bush varieties can even be grown in containers.



Sowing and Growing:

Once the soil temperatures have reached a consistent 65°F or higher, plant in rows 1" deep, 6 to 10" apart. When the plants reach 4" tall, thin to a final spacing of 1 to 2 feet. Cucumbers can also be planted in hills of 3 to 6 seeds each, ½ to 1" deep, and anywhere from 1 to 2 feet apart. Trellising is highly recommended - the vines get better air circulation and sunlight, yielding more uniform shapes and cleaner, straighter fruits. You'll want to water deeply - frequent but shallow watering will reduce yields. Cucumbers may take a while to set fruit, because their first set of flowers can be all male. Both male and female flowers must be blooming at the same time, so be patient.

Harvesting:

Cucumbers are ready when 6-8" long for most slicing cucumbers, 4-6" for dills, and 3" for pickling. Cucumbers are best when young, uniformly green, and firm and crisp. Except for lemon cucumbers, you shouldn't let them get yellow.

Pick early in the morning before the sun hits the cucumbers for best texture and flavor. Harvest by cutting cucumbers free from their vines and just above the fruit. At peak harvest time, you should be picking cucumbers every couple of days.