



Gardeners Helping Gardeners Succeed

WHEN TO HARVEST WARM SEASON VEGETABLES

BEANS Snap beans or green beans are ready to harvest 50-65 days after sowing seeds. Start picking beans every few days to ensure more beans will set and continue harvesting for 6-8 weeks.

Lima beans are ready for harvest 65-100 days after sowing seeds. Usually they are planted as starts here because of their long growing season. Harvest while they are still green and the pods are plump and glossy. At this stage, the pods change from dark to pale green.

Shelling beans usually take 120 days to mature and since the growing season is so short seeds need to be started indoors and planted outdoors as soon as danger of frost has passed. These pods need to dry on the vine and as soon as they start to split, they are ready to harvest.

Soybeans (Edamame) can take 85-120 days to mature and are harvested like shelling beans after they dry on the plant. Fava beans require a long, cool season that is frost free and usually do not do as well here for that reason. Harvest them the same as you would snap or green beans.

CORN Corn seed can be purchased in early, mid, or late season varieties. Select early season varieties which will mature in 60-70 days and mid-season varieties which will mature in 70-80 days to extend the harvest time. Wait until the silk turns brown and ears are completely filled out. Gently pull back the leaves and pierce a kernel with a fingernail – if a milky juice comes out the corn is ready to be picked.

CUCUMBERS, ZUCCHINI, SUMMER SQUASH As the flowers set, start to inspect daily. Pick early and often. If these vegetables get too big, they get spongy. The more you harvest the more these plants will fruit for you.

EGGPLANT Eggplant matures between 65-80 days. Harvest when the eggplant is full, firm, and glossy. An eggplant is beyond prime when its color dulls and the seeds turn brown.

MELONS Melons take 70-100 days to mature after transplanting. Muskmelons develop a textured surface, called netting, which turns tannish brown as the fruit ripens. They also ripen on the vine and don't get any sweeter after they are picked. When they are ripe, they will start to crack at the stem end of the fruit. Gently pushing on the stem will cause the fruit to 'slip' or break free. A watermelon is ripe if it makes a dull 'thunk' when thumped and its underside has turned from white to pale yellow. Honeydews change colors from creamy green to ivory yellow. Ripe melons give off a distinct fruity smell at the blossom end.

OKRA Okra is planted in Northern Nevada as a vegetable start although it can be planted in warm soil (higher than 70°) and will mature in 55-65 days. The pods are ready to harvest when they are 2-4" long. Harvest every few days to maximize yield. Wear gloves when harvesting – touching prickly hairs on the leaves and pods causes contact dermatitis in some people.

PEPPERS Peppers mature from 60-95 days after planting. Pepper plants are brittle so cut the peppers with shears so as to not break the plant stems. Pick sweet peppers when they are full size. Allow pimientos to turn fully red on the plants but harvest any other peppers at any color stage. They typically become sweeter as the peppers ripen. Hot peppers can be harvested when full size and still green or after they turn red or yellow for richer flavor.

POTATOES Tender 'new' potatoes can be harvested from around the edge of each plant when the vine starts to flower or about 8 weeks after planting. Harvest mature potatoes 90-120 days after planting. When the foliage starts to turn yellow carefully dig up the potatoes using a spading fork. Potatoes are a member of the nightshade family and in the presence of strong sunlight the potato produces solanine which is a naturally occurring glycoalkaloid poison which can cause the potatoes to turn green and may cause the person eating green potatoes to experience gastrointestinal symptoms. Cure them in a cool, dark place for a week prior to eating.

PUMPKIN, WINTER SQUASH Harvest pumpkins and winter squash when the rind is firm enough that it is hard to pierce it with fingernail. Generally, this is 90-120 days after planting. The leaves of the plants will start to yellow and brown and look ragged. Cut the vines leaving a stump and let them cure in the sunlight for a week prior to storing in a cool, dark place. Pumpkins are susceptible to hard freeze damage if they are not mature enough to harvest, so protect them if it is forecast.