

Planting Guide For Home Gardening In Alabama

A successful home garden comes with careful planning and constant attention! Select the site carefully, plant at the correct time, use the right amount of fertilizer, use adapted varieties, and control pests.

Site. Select a site exposed to full sun. Too many gardeners try to grow vegetables in competition with trees, shade from buildings, or fences. The soil should be well drained and free of harmful chemicals, oil, ashes, mortar, etc.

Soil Management. You can improve your garden soil by adding organic matter—compost, leaf mold, or well-rotted sawdust. Work it into the soil in the late fall.

Lime And Fertilizer. A soil test is the best way to determine lime and fertilizer needs. Your county Extension office has information about soil tests. Testing at least every 3 years is a good idea.

For most vegetables, the soil pH should be around 6.0 to 6.5. To be effective, the lime must be mixed into the soil before planting.

If you don't soil test, use enough fertilizer to supply 120 pounds per acre each of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P_2O_5), and potassium (K_2O). This could be supplied by using 1,000 pounds of 4-12-12 plus 250 pounds of ammonium nitrate. For each 1,000 square feet of garden area, use 25 pounds of 4-12-12 and 6 pounds of ammonium nitrate. On 100 feet of row, you would use 4 quarts (8 pounds) of 4-12-12 and 1 quart (2 pounds) of ammonium nitrate. When fertilizer is applied in the row, mix it thoroughly with the soil before planting.

Another method to get the same amount of plant food would be to use 1,500 pounds of 8-8-8 per acre. On 1,000 square feet, apply 25 pounds of 8-8-8 broadcast before land preparation; then sidedress each 100 feet of row with 2 quarts (4 pounds) of 8-8-8.

Long-season crops such as tomatoes, cabbage, pepper, okra, and potatoes need more fertilizer than short-season crops. Experience and close observation are the best guides for additional sidedressing.

Seed And Plants. Seed are cheap, so get the best available. Don't seed too thickly. Plant small seed, such as turnips and carrots, about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. Plant larger seed, such as beans, cucumbers, and peas, about 1 inch deep.

Use only stocky, healthy, fresh plants. Always water transplants to settle soil around roots. Set tall plants deeper in the ground than they grew originally.

Weed Control. To control weeds, use a mulch. Deep cultivation after plants are older will do more damage than good. Chemical weed killers are not usu-

ally recommended for home gardens. Before using a weed control product, get full information on how to use it and what crop it should be used on.

Irrigation. Water is essential for a top-notch garden. During long dry periods, soak the garden thoroughly once a week; don't just sprinkle daily. Light, frequent irrigation helps only during the period of seed germination.

Overhead irrigation, especially late in the afternoon, is likely to spread certain foliage diseases. If you use overhead irrigation, do so earlier in the day so plants can dry before night.

Disease Control. The best practices in disease control are rotation, clean seed, resistant varieties (when available), early planting, plowing under old crop debris, mulching, and seed treatment. Chemical fungicides may be used to control some common leaf diseases of tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and cantaloupes. If the garden is heavily infested with nematodes, either move the garden or heat the soil through a process called soil solarization.

Insect Control. For a successful garden, you must control insects. Early planting will miss some insects, but usually you'll have to use insecticides.

Use bio-sensitive insecticides as your first choice to treat for insect problems in the garden. Safer insecticidal soaps will help control aphids and other soft-bodied insects early on. Malathion is a good all-round material for aphids and red spider mites and gives some worm control. Carbaryl (Sevin) is another effective material, especially for bean beetles, tomato and corn earworms, cucumber beetles, and pickleworms. *Bacillus thuringiensis* or *Bt* (Dipel, Thuricide) is an excellent biological control for cabbage worm or cabbage looper.

Use all chemicals—for insects, weeds or nematodes—according to directions on the label. The label will tell you the amount to be used, the crops to use it on, and the number of days between application and harvest. The label is one of the most important pieces of garden literature available. Read and heed it for effective use and safety.

Harvesting. The main reason for a home garden is to produce high-quality vegetables. Harvest often to get vegetables at the proper stage of maturity. If beans, okra, cucumbers, etc., are left to mature fully, the plant will stop producing. Early morning harvest, before vegetables absorb heat from the sun, is best for most vegetables. Freeze or can the surplus if you want to enjoy your garden all year.

Alabama Vegetable Garden Planting Chart

These planting dates are for Central Alabama. For South Alabama make spring plantings approximately 10 days earlier and fall plantings 10 days later. In North Alabama make spring plantings approximately 10 days later and fall plantings 10 days earlier.

Vegetable	Days To Maturity*	Cultivars**	Planting Dates Spring	Planting Dates Fall	Seeds Or Plants/100 ft.	Spacing, Rows/Plants (inches)
Asparagus	2nd Year	Mary Washington (female hybrid), UC-157 (male hybrid), Jersey Giant (male hybrid)	April***		50-75 crowns	36x9-15
Beans, Bush Snap	50 - 60	Contender, Green Crop, Derby	April	Aug. 5-20	¾ lb.	36x2-3
Beans, Pole Snap	60 - 75	Dade, Kentucky Wonder, Kentucky Blue	Apr. 10-30	July 20-Aug. 5	½ lb.	36x6-8
Beans, Lima	65 - 75	Fordhook 242, Baby Fordhook, Henderson	Apr. 10-May 10	July 20-Aug. 5	¾ lb.	36x3-6
Beans, Pole Lima	80 - 85	Carolina Sieva, Florida Speckled, King of the Garden	Apr. 15-May 15	July 15-Aug. 1	½ lb.	36x6-8
Beets	55 - 65	Asgrow Wonder, Detroit Dark Red	February	August	½ oz.	30x2
Broccoli	55 - 75	Green Comet, Green Duke, Packman, Premium Crop, Mariner		Aug. 1-15	½ oz.	36x18
Brussels Sprouts	90 - 120	Long Island Improved, Jade Cross Hybrid, Prince Marvel		Aug. 1-Sept. 1	½ oz.	36x18
Cabbage	60 - 85	Bravo, Charleston Wakefield, Round Dutch, Stonehead Savoy Cabbage: Ace	Jan. 1-Feb. 15***	July 25-Aug. 10	½ oz.	36x12
Oriental Cabbages	45 - 60	Michihli, Bok choi, Pak choi, Napa		Aug. 1-15	½ oz.	36x12
Carrots	60 - 80	Chantenay, Danvers 126, Lady Fingers, Scarlet Nantes, Thumbelina	March	July 20-Sept. 20	¼ oz.	30x1-2
Cauliflower	60 - 75	Snowball, Snow Crown, Violet Queen	Jan. 1-Feb. 15***	July 25-Aug.10	½ oz.	36x12
Collards	60 - 80	Champion, Georgia Southern, Vates, Top Bunch		July 1-Sept. 15	½ oz.	36x12-18
Corn, Sweet	65 - 90	Silver Queen, Golden Queen, Seneca Chief, How Sweet It Is, Merit, Snow Belle	Mar. 15-June 1		¼ lb.	36x12-18
Cucumbers	50 - 65	Pickling: Calypso, Explorer; Slicing: Dasher II, Fanfare, Salad Bush, General Lee	Apr. 15-May 15	July 1-20	1 oz.	60x24
Eggplant	65 - 85	Black Beauty, Black Belle, Classic, Ghost Buster, Ichiban	Apr. 15-May 15***	July 1-20***	50 plants	36x24
Kale	50 - 70	Dwarf Scotch, Vates		Aug. 15-Sept. 15	½ oz.	36x10
Kohlrabi	45 - 55	Grand Duke, Rapid	March	Aug. 15-Sept.	½ oz. or 150-200 plants	24x6
Lettuces	45 - 85	Leafy lettuces: Blackseeded Simpson, Salad Bowl, Red Sails Bibb; Buttercrunch, Summer Bibb Leafy salad greens: Arugula, Chicory (Radicchio), Corn Salad	Jan. 15-Feb.***	Aug. 15-Sept. 1	⅛ oz.	30x12

Alabama Vegetable Garden Planting Chart (cont.)

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Muskmelons	75 - 90	AUrorora, Ambrosia, Chilton, Gulf Coast, Athena	April		1 oz.	60x24
Mustard	40 - 50	Florida Broadleaf, Giant Southern Curled, Red Giant	Feb. 1-Mar. 15	Aug. 15-Sept. 5	½ oz.	30x2
Okra	50 - 65	Clemson Spineless, Emerald, Lee, Burgundy	April 10-June 30		1 oz.	36x12
Onions, Bulb	100 - 120	Fresh bulb: Granex 33, Grano 502, Grano 1015 Long-storing bulb: Yellow, White, Red	Jan. 15-Mar. 15***	Sept. 15-Oct. 15	½ oz. or 400 plants	30x2-4
Onions, Green	40 - 55	Multiplying: Evergreen		October-February	1 qt.	30x2-4
Peas, Garden	60 - 70	Little Marvel, Green Arrow, Snappy, Victory Freezer	February		1 lb.	36x2
Peas, Southern	60 - 70	Pinkeye Purple Hull, Mississippi Purple, Mississippi Silver, Freeze Green	April-July		½ lb.	42x4-6
Peppers	65 - 85	Hot: Cayenne, Super Chili, Habanero, Hungarian Wax, Jalapeno Sweet: Sweet Banana, Gypsy, Keystone Resistant Giant, Golden Summer, Chocolate Beauty, Purple Beauty, King Arthur, Bell King	April 1-May 10***	July***	50 plants	36x24
Potatoes, Irish	70 - 90	Red LaSoda, Red Pontiac, Sebago, Superior	February	August 1-15	12 lbs.	36x12
Potatoes, Sweet	90 - 120	Beauregard, Georgia Red, Red Jewel	April 15-June 15***		100 plants	36x12
Pumpkins	90 - 110	Autumn Gold, Connecticut Field, Baby Bear, Jack Be Little, Peak A Boo, Spookie	July		1 oz.	72-96 x 36-60
Radishes	25 - 30	Cherry Belle, Scarlet Globe, White Icicle	Feb. 1-April 1	Sept. 1-Oct. 15	½ oz.	24x1
Rutabagas	90 - 120	American Purple Top		July	½ oz.	36x6-12
Spinach	40 - 45	Bloomsdale Longstanding	Feb. 15-Mar. 15	September	1 oz.	30x2-3
Squash, Summer	40 - 55	Dixie, Yellow Crookneck, Yellow Straightneck, Cocozelle, Freedom III, Lemondrop (straightneck), Prelude III (crookneck), Sundrops, Tivoli; Zucchini: Elite	April	August 1-15	1 oz.	36x15
Squash, Winter	85 - 100	Acorn, Cream of the Crop, Winter Butternut, Vegetable Spaghetti Squash	April	July 15-Aug. 1	½ oz.	60x36
Swiss Chard	60 - 70	Fordhook Giant, Rhubarb Chard	Feb.15-Mar.15	September	½ oz.	36x15

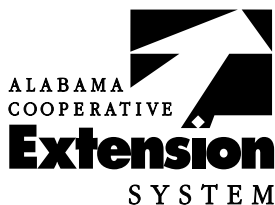
Alabama Vegetable Garden Planting Chart (cont.)

Vegetable	Days To Maturity*	Cultivars**	Planting Dates Spring	Planting Dates Fall	Seeds Or Plants/100 ft.	Spacing, Rows/Plants (inches)
Tomatoes	70 - 90	Atkinson, Better Boy, Big Beef, Celebrity, Husky Gold, Monte Carlo, Small Fry and Sweet Chelsea (cherries)	April***	July***	35-50 plants	60x24-36
Turnips	40 - 60	Purpletop, Shogoin, Just Right (roots)	Feb. 1-April 1	Aug. 10-Oct. 1	¼ oz.	30x2
Watermelons	80 - 90	Bush Sugar Baby, Charleston Gray, Crimson Sweet, AU Golden Producer (yellow meat)	April	June 15-30	½ oz.	96x96

*Days to maturity are from planting seed or setting transplants in the garden. The number of days will vary depending on cultivar (some mature earlier than others), temperature, and general growing conditions. Check catalogs for individual maturity time.

**Cultivars listed in this chart represent a few of those recommended for Alabama. There are many other good cultivars that are worthy of trial in the home garden.

***Transplant.



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Use chemicals only according to the directions on the label. Follow all directions, precautions, and restrictions that are listed.

Trade names are used only to give specific information. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System does not endorse or guarantee any product and does not recommend one product instead of another that might be similar.

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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