

# Eggplant



**Sun:** Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 24 to 36 inches apart within rows or 2 plants per 5-gallon container. Plant mid-April through mid-May and in July.

**Soil:** Amend with organic matter to create a well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows the pH is below 6.2, apply lime as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

**Water:** Keep soil consistently moist but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week and more during hot summer days. Keep leaves dry to avoid fungal diseases. Mulch helps retain moisture.

**Plant:** Start seedlings 3 to 4 weeks before planting and slowly harden off 1 week before moving to the garden. If buying transplants, choose those with healthy color and a stocky appearance. Avoid plants with flowers. Dig the planting hole as deep as the root ball. Firmly pat down the soil and water deeply.

**Fertilize:** In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting, according to label directions. Apply nitrogen 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), 4 to 6 weeks after planting.

**Insects/Diseases/Weeds:** Scout plants frequently for insect and disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicides regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

**Harvest:** Harvest at 65 to 85 days from transplant when fruits are 4 to 6 inches in diameter and firm and bright in color. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

**Other:** Eggplant is sensitive to cold soils and frost.

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