

Vegetable Gardening in Georgia

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There is nothing quite like a home garden to supply you and your family with a variety of nutritious vegetables that can be enjoyed fresh or preserved for later use. When space is limited, a plentiful supply of crops such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and okra can be grown with a few properly cared-for plants.

Site

Try to select a site that receives at least 8 to 10 hours of sunlight a day. Select a location that is conveniently located near the house and a water supply. The soil should have a good texture and be well-drained. Avoid sites that have a history of hard-to-control weeds such as nutsedge and bermudagrass.

Make a Plan

Plan your garden out on paper first before ordering seed. For small areas, select those crops that you like best and consider using dwarf compact varieties that will produce an adequate supply on a few plants. Also, plan to use the space continuously by planting another in-season crop soon after the last harvest is completed. Plant tall-growing plants together on the north or west side of the garden so they will not shade lower-growing plants. Make a map and keep it current so that the vegetables can be rotated within the garden from year to year. Remember to plan for space between rows to walk down to harvest the crop and maintain the bed.

Varieties, Seed and Plants

Be sure to select recommended varieties for your main planting. Many other varieties are available, and new varieties are being introduced each year. Try a few new varieties on a small scale to determine their worth in your area. Varieties listed in the Vegetable Planting Chart represent a few of the proven varieties.

Always buy good quality seed from a reputable company. Do not save your own seed unless it is a unique, unavailable variety.

When buying plants, purchase fresh, stocky plants that are free of diseases and insects.

Lime and Fertilizer

Run a soil test through your local county Extension office several months prior to planting to determine lime and fertilizer needs. If the pH is low (acidic soil), apply the recommended amount of lime before preparing the soil so it can be mixed with the soil during land preparation. A pH of 6.0 to 6.5 is recommended for all vegetables except Irish potatoes, which require a pH of 5.0 to 6.0. Vegetables are classified as light, medium or heavy feeders, based on their fertilizer recommendations for each group.

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HEAVY 10-10-10 or 6-12-12 at a rate of 35 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft.	MEDIUM 10-10-10 or 6-12-12 at a rate of 20 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft.			LIGHT 6-12-12 at a rate of 10 pounds per 1,000 sq. ft.
cabbage celery lettuce onions potatoes, Irish potatoes, sweet tomatoes	artichoke asparagus beans beets cantaloupes carrots corn, sweet	cucumbers eggplant greens herbs okra peas, English pepper	pumpkin radish rhubarb squash Swiss chard watermelon	peas, Southern

Vegetable Planting Chart

Vegetable	Days to Maturity*	Cultivars**	Planting Dates		Seeds / Plants per 100 ft.	Spacing Rows per Plants	Depth to Plant***
			Spring	Fall			
asparagus	2nd year	Jersey Giant, Jersey Knight, Mary Washington, Purple Passion	Jan. 15 – Mar. 15	Nov. & Dec.	50 roots	36" x 18-24"	6"
beans, bush	50-60	Bronco, Blue Lake 274, Half-Runners (State, White, Volunteer), Kentucky Runner, Roma	Mar. 15 – May 1	Jul. 5 – Aug. 10	0.5 lb	36" x 2-4"	1"-1.5"
beans, pole	65-75	Blue Lake, Dade, Kentucky Blue, Moccasin	Mar. 15 – May 10	Jul. 1 – Aug. 1	0.5 lb	36" x 4-12"	1"-1.5"
beans, lima	65-75	Henderson's Bush Fordhook 242, Jackson Wonder (Speckled)	Mar. 15 – Jun. 1	Jul. 1 – Aug. 1	0.5 lb	36" x 3-4"	1"-1.5"
beans, pole lima	80-85	Sieva, Florida Speckled	Mar. 15 – Jun. 1	Jul. 1 – Aug. 1	0.5 lb	36" x 6-8"	1"-1.5"
beets	55-65	Detroit Dark Red, Red Ace, Ruby Queen	Feb. 15 – Apr. 1	Aug. 1 – Sep. 20	1 oz	18-36" x 2"	0.5"
broccoli	60-80	Marathon, Packman, Patriot, Premium Crop, Bravo, Decathion	Feb. 15 – Mar. 15	Aug. 1 – Sep. 1	100 plants	36" x 12"	—
butterpea	70	Dixie	Apr. 1 – May 1	Jul. 1 – Aug. 1	0.5 lb	36" x 3-4"	1"-1.5"
cabbage	70-120	A&C No. 5+, Blue Dynasty, Bravo, Early Round Dutch, Rio Verde, Green Jewel	Jan. 15 – Mar. 15	Aug. 1 – Oct. 1	100 plants	36" x 12"	—
cantaloupe	80-90	Ambrosia, Athena, Saticoy Early, Sweet	Mar. 20 – Jun. 20	—	1 oz	60" x 36"	1"
carrot	70-95	Chantenay, Scarlet Nantes, Sweetbites, Sweet Delight, Thumbelina (small)	Jan. 15 – Mar. 20	Aug. 20 – Sep. 15	0.5 oz	18-36" x 2-3"	0.25"
cauliflower	60-75	Absolute, Early Snowball, Graffiti (purple color), White Magic, Symphony	Mar. 1 – Apr. 1	Jul. 15 – Aug. 15	100 plants	36" x 12"	—
collards	55-85	Blue Max, Georgia Southern, Hevi-Crop	Feb. 1 – Mar. 15	Aug. 1 – Sep. 1	0.5 oz	36" x 8-16"	0.5"
corn, yellow	65-90	Bodacious, Golden Queen, Honey Select, Mirai 131, Seneca	Mar. 15 – Jun. 1	—	0.25 lb	36" x 12-18"	1"-1.5"
corn, white	65-90	Avalon, How Sweet It Is, Seneca Sensation, Silver King, Silver Princess, Silver Queen	Mar. 15 – Jun. 1	—	0.25 lb	36" x 12-18"	1"-1.5"
corn, bi-color	65-90	Ambrosia, Butter & Sugar, Honey 'n Pearl, Mirai 301, Peaches & Cream, Serendipity, Sweet Breed Chorus	Mar. 15 – Jun. 1	—	0.25 lb	36" x 12-18"	1"-1.5"
cucumber, slicing	50-65	Bush – Salad Bush Hybrid, Bush Crop, Fanfare Vine – Burpless Hybrid, Diva, Marketmore, Straight Eight, Sweet Slice, Sweet Success	Apr. 1 – May 15	Jul. 15 – Aug. 15	1 oz	60" x 12"	0.5"-0.75"
cucumber, pickling	50-65	Bush Pickle, Calypso, County Fair	Apr. 1 – May 15	Jul. 15 – Aug. 15	1 oz	60" x 12"	0.5"-0.75"
cucumber, gynoecious	50-65	Calypso, General Lee	Apr. 1 – May 15	Jul. 15 – Aug. 15	1 oz	60" x 12"	0.5"-0.75"
eggplant	75-90	Black Beauty, Classic, Dusky, Ghost Buster's (white), Calliope	Apr. 1 – May 15	Jul. 10 – Jul. 30	50 plants	36" x 24"	—
kale	50-70	Vates, Dwarf Siberian, Blue Armor, Blue Knight	Feb. 1 – Mar. 10	Aug. 1 – Sep. 1	0.5 oz	36" x 8-16"	0.5"
lettuce	60-85	Butterhead, Romaine, Buttercrunch	Jan. 15 – Mar. 1	Sep. 1 – Oct. 1	0.25 oz	18-36" x 8-12"	1/8"
mustard	40-50	Florida Broadleaf, Southern Giant Curled, Red Giant, Savannah	Jan. 15 – Apr. 1	Aug. 15 – Sep. 15	0.5 oz	18-36" x 2"	0.5"
okra	55-65	Annie Oakley II, Burgundy, Cajun Delight, Clemson Spineless	Apr. 1 – Jun. 1	Jun. 15 – Jul. 10	1 oz	36" x 12"	1"
onion, green	60-90	White Portugal	Jan. 1 – Mar. 15	Sep. 1 – Dec. 31	300 plants	18-36" x 3"	—
onion, dry bulb	100-120	Burgundy, Excel, Grano, Red Creole, Savannah Sweet	Jan. 1 – Mar. 15	Oct. 10 – Nov. 10	300 plants	18-36" x 3-4"	—

*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 the chart represent a few of those recommended. There are many other good cultivars worthy of trial.

***Plant shallowly in heavy (clay) soil when adequate moisture is present.

Vegetable	Days to Maturity*	Cultivars**	Planting Dates		Seeds / Plants per 100 ft.	Spacing Rows per Plants	Depth to Plant***
			Spring	Fall			
peas, garden (English)	60-70	Lincoln, Jackson Wonder, Wando, Little Marvel, Green Arrow, Maestro	Jan. 15 – Feb. 15	—	1 lb	36" x 2"	1"-2"
peas, edible pod	60-70	Sugar Daddy, Snow Pea, Sugar Snap	Jan. 15 – Feb. 15	—	1 lb	36" x 2"	1"-2"
peas, Southern	60-70	Blackeyed – California #5 Pinkeyed – Purple Hull FVR Cream Pea – Texas Crème Crowder Pea – Mississippi Silver, Zipper Cream	Apr. 1 – Aug. 10	—	0.5 lb	36" x 3-4"	1"-2"
pepper, bell	65-80	Big Bertha, Camelot x3a, Colossal, Karma	Apr. 1 – Jun. 1	Jul. 25 – Aug. 10	50 plants	36" x 24"	—
pepper, hot	65-95	Habeñero, Jalepeño, Tula, Marbles	Apr. 1 – Jun. 1	—	50 plants	36" x 24"	—
pepper, hot-sweet	65-95	Banana Supreme, Kuberville, Sweet Banana	Apr. 1 – Jun. 1	—	50 plants	36" x 24"	—
potatoes, Irish	70-90	Red (Pontiac), White (Kennebec, Atlantic, Yukon Gold)	Jan. 15 – Mar. 1	—	12 lb	36" x 12"	4"-5"
potatoes, sweet	90-120	Centennial, Georgia Red, Giant Jet, Hernandes, Red Jewel	April 15 – Jun. 15	—	100 plants	36" x 12"	—
pumpkin, tiny	85-120	Little Ironsides	—	—	1 oz	72" x 48"	1"
pumpkin, pie type	85-120	Small Sugar, Sugar Baby, Touch of Autumn	May 15 – Jul. 1	—	1 oz	72" x 48"	1"
pumpkin, small	85-120	Autumn Gold, Jack O Lantern, Jack of All Trades	(depending on maturity date)	—	1 oz	72" x 48"	1"
pumpkin, large	85-120	Aladdin, Gold Rush, Major Lantern, Merlin	—	—	1 oz	72" x 48"	1"
pumpkin, giant	85-120	Dill's Atlantic, Giant, Prize Winner	—	—	1 oz	72" x 48"	1"
radish	25-30	Cherry Bell, Scarlet Globe, Champion	Jan. 15 – Apr. 1	Sep. 1 – Oct. 15	1 oz	24" x 1"	0.5"
spinach	40-45	Melody, Winter Bloomsdale, Hybrid #7	Jan. 15 – Mar. 15	Sep. 1 – Oct. 15	1 oz	18-36" x 2"	0.5"-0.75"
squash, summer (zucchini)	40-55	Any yellow or green—all are good and easy to grow. Use compact varieties for limited-space gardens.	Apr. 1 – May 15	Aug. 1 – Aug. 25	0.5 oz	36" x 24"	1"-2"
squash, winter	85-120	Acorn, Buttercup Bonbon, Butternut	Apr. 1 – Jul. 1	—	0.5 oz	60" x 36"	1"-2"
tomato, determinate	70-90	Bush – Celebrity, Early Girl BHN 444, BHN 640, Celebrity, Mountain Fresh, Mountain Spring, Rutgers, Amelia, Mountain Pride	Mar. 25 – May 1	Jun. 15 – Jul. 15	50 plants	48" x 24"	—
tomato, indeterminate	70-90	Early Girl, Better Boy, Big Beef, Big Boy, Beefmaster	Mar. 25 – May 1	Jun. 15 – Jul. 15	50 plants	48" x 24"	—
tomato, cherry	70-90	Jolly, Sweet Baby Girl, Super Sweet 100	Mar. 25 – May 1	Jun. 15 – Jul. 15	50 plants	48" x 24"	—
tomato, grape	70-90	Grape, Juliet	Mar. 25 – May 1	Jun. 15 – Jul. 15	50 plants	48" x 24"	—
turnip	40-60	Purple Top, Royal Crown	Jan. 15 – Apr. 1	Aug. 10 – Sep. 15	0.5 oz	18-36" x 2"	0.5"
watermelon – large	80-90	Mardi Gras, Royal Majesty, Sangria	Mar. 20 – May 1	—	1 oz	72" x 36-48	1"-2"
watermelon – round	80-90	Baby Doll, Crimson Sweet, Ice Box, Imagination, Jade Star	Mar. 20 – May 1	—	1 oz	72" x 36-48	1"-2"
watermelon – small	80-90	Palm Melon, Solitaire	Mar. 20 – May 1	—	1 oz	72" x 36-48"	1"-2"

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Apply fertilizer according to the soil test results. Most vegetables need initial fertilizer at planting time, and again after they have begun to mature. Some vegetables, such as corn, need to be fertilized by side dressing after the plants are about knee high. Put the side dressing several inches away from the plant, never directly on the plant.

If additional nitrogen is needed on peppers, eggplant or tomatoes, apply when the first fruits are about 1 inch in diameter.

APPROXIMATE POUNDS OF FERTILIZER PER 100 FT*				
Pounds per Acre	24-inch Rows	30-inch Rows	36-inch Rows	per 100 sq. ft.
100	0.5	2/3	0.75	0.25
200	1	1.25	1.5	0.5
300	1.5	1 2/3	2.5	0.75
400	2	2.5	3	1
500	1.5	3	3.75	1.25
1,000	5	6	7.5	1.5
2,000	10	12	15	5

*One pint of mixed fertilizer will weigh about 1 pound. For row widths not given, figure in proportion to the given rates.

Soil Preparation

Begin soil preparation in the fall by chopping litter and spading or turning deeply to bury the litter. Add other organic matter such as compost, leaf mold or well-rotted sawdust or manure.

Planting the Garden

Information on cultivars, planting dates and spacing is given in the planting chart. Several vegetables can be successively planted to lengthen the harvesting season.

Cultivation

Cultivate or hoe the garden as often as needed to control weeds and grasses. Do not cultivate or hoe too deeply, or root injury will result. Cultivating too often will also result in the soil drying out excessively.

Mulch

A mulch of straw, leaves, compost or pine straw will help conserve moisture, control weeds and reduce cultivation. Apply enough mulch to have 2 to 4 inches after settling. Newspaper can also be applied as a mulch two to three layers thick around plants. Apply 3 inches of straw or compost on top of the paper.

Watering

Water the garden as often as needed to maintain a uniform moisture supply. In the absence of rain, a good soaking once a week will probably be adequate for heavier soils. Light, sandy soils might require an application more frequently. Water early in the morning so foliage will dry off quickly, which helps prevent diseases. Use soaker hoses or irrigation tape if possible to prevent foliage from getting wet and help prevent disease.

Control Insects, Diseases and Nematodes

Serious losses can occur from insects, diseases and nematodes. If nematodes are present, control measures must be taken before the crop is planted. Preventive control measures can be used for insects and diseases, or can be started as soon as problems are spotted. Contact your local county Extension agent for assistance in pest identification and recommended control measures.

Harvesting

Harvest vegetables as soon as they are ripe. Leaving them on the vine too long will lead to disease and insect problems and will cause crops such as beans, okra, squash and cucumbers to be over-mature and terminate or stop producing. Any surplus production should be canned or frozen as soon as possible after harvesting. Information on canning and freezing is available at your local county Extension office. For more information visit: <http://extension.uga.edu>.

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