

Growing Cucumbers in the Home Garden

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Originating in India, cucumbers found their way to North America with Christopher Columbus. Since then cucumbers have been grown and used extensively either fresh or pickled. Cucumbers come in a variety of shapes and colors including white ones and a variety that resembles a lemon in size, shape and color. There are many excellent varieties of cucumbers available. (Click on link) to Selected List of Vegetable Varieties for Home Garden Use in New York State to see which ones are best in your area.



Culture. Choose a full sun location. The soil should be rich in organic matter and well drained. Cucumbers do well in neutral to slightly alkaline soils. Sow seed directly into the ground after danger of frost when the soil is warm and temperatures are moderate. Cucumbers grow best with temperatures between 65-85 degrees. Plant seeds four to five in a hill. Seeds should be placed one inch deep and rows should be 40-60 inches apart. In the row, the hills should be 12-18 inches apart. Check the seed packet for trellising needs, as there are bush varieties available. Thinning of seedlings takes place when seedlings have 2 to 3 leaves per plant. Keep 1 to 2 plants per hill. Competition for nutrients will decrease yield.

Harvest. Harvest fruit while they are young and green and seeds are soft. A yellow color indicates mature seeds and the fruit is beyond eating stage. Over-mature or poorly shaped fruits should be removed from plants in order to keep vines productive. Once picking starts, the vines should be checked every other day.

Pests.

Bacterial wilt is spread by the cucumber beetle. Control of the beetle will help to control wilt. Choose varieties that are resistant to wilt. Remove and destroy infected plants to help control the spread of wilt. Five-year rotation in a garden is a good preventative measure.

Cucumber mosaic virus is spread by aphids. The same controls apply for this virus as well.

Powdery mildew is best kept under control by good air circulation. Choosing resistant varieties and rotation of crops is also recommended.

Squash vine borer, striped or spotted cucumber beetle and aphids are the common cucumber bugs. Fall cleanup is essential for the vegetable garden and bug control. Please refer to the Cornell Bulletin 139S74II – Pest Management Around the Home, Part II for pesticide recommendations.

Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete, and up-to-date pest management information for New York State. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, and human errors are still possible. These recommendations are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Trade names used herein are for convenience only. No endorsement of products is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products implied.

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Sources: Fact Sheets from Cornell