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Cooperative Extension
of Schenectady County

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Cucumbers

Cucumbers are a warm season crop. Cucumbers have a short growing season and mature in 50-70 days.

How to Grow:

Sow seed 1" deep, 3-5 seeds to 1" of row. Thin to 12" between plants. Distance between rows 48-72". If grown in hills, sow 4-6 seeds in each hill and when plants are up, thin to 2 to 3 per hill. Hills are spaced 24-36" apart in rows 48-72" apart. When growing season is short, start seeds indoors 4-6 weeks before time to set out transplants on Memorial Day.

Fertilizing and Watering:

Cucumbers respond to generous amounts of organic matter in the soil. For special treatment, dig the planting furrow 2" deep and fill the first foot or so with manure mixed with peat moss, compost, sawdust or other organic material. Fill rest of the furrow with soil, peat moss, and 5-10-10 fertilizer at the rate of 2 lbs. to 50' of row.

Roots grow to a depth of 3' if soil is normal, so watering should be slow and deep. If plant is under stress from lack of moisture, it will just stop growing. It will pick up when moisture is applied. It is normal for leaves of cucumbers to wilt in the middle of the day during hot spells, but check the soil for moisture at the below-surface levels.

Limited Space:

Cucumbers can be trained on a trellis, take very little ground space and you will harvest more attractive fruits. Cucumbers that are curved when grown on the ground grow almost straight when on a trellis, i.e., Burpee's Hybrid. Consider midget varieties when space is limited. They can be grown on the ground, in tubs and boxes or as hanging plants.

Don't worry if the first early flowers don't set fruits. The male flowers open first, then a week later you'll see flowers with baby cucumbers at their bases. If the delay worries you, try one of the new all-female hybrids. They set fruit with the first blossoms and thus bear fruit closer to the base of the plants. **Important:** Keep all fruit picked as they reach usable size. To leave even one or two fruits on the vine can stop new production.

Any of the following varieties are fine to choose from:

Slicing:

1. Marketmore 80 or 76 Mosaic resistant
2. Tablegreen 65
3. Sweet Slice non-bitter
4. Spacemaster
5. Dasher II

6. Pacer
7. Burpless Hybrid
8. Tablegreen 65

Pickling:

1. Premier
2. Score
3. Regal
4. County Fair II

Cucumbers come in a wide variety of shapes and colors. There's a white one available and one that resembles a lemon in size, shape and color.

Pests and Control:

1. Scab Fungus: none -rotate crops, plant resistant varieties
2. Mosaic: none – plant resistant varieties
3. Powdery Mildew: avoid crowding plants
4. Squash Vine Borer: malthion can be used for control; if there is a history of problems, first spray about June 20 to stems and vines at the base of the plant; spray three times thereafter at 7-day intervals; be sure to wait one day until harvest.

Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, 6/03