

UF/IFAS Extension Presents
SPRING INTO VEGETABLE GARDENING

Interactive Video Series for Novice Gardeners

Harvesting Your Spring Vegetables

Taylor Vandiver

UF/IFAS Extension – Leon County
Horticulture Agent



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Objectives

- Harvesting Tips and Tricks
- Plant Specific:
 - When to plan your harvest
 - What to look for when harvesting
 - How to handle harvested fruit
 - Storage and preservation after harvesting

Harvesting

- Harvesting too late:
 - Can result in less tenderness and poor quality
 - Leaving vegetables on the plant too long can drain the plant = less production
- Harvesting too early :
 - may result in smaller vegetables and less flavor
- It's not a bad idea to pick and taste a few of the vegetables for readiness

Harvesting

- Store-purchased seedlings are usually sold at 4 weeks old
- The days to harvest range for each plant is usually accurate
 - However, each garden has its own microclimate and you'll want to test a few vegetables from your garden for readiness before you complete a full harvest
- Harvest vegetables in the cool part of the morning if possible
- Store them as soon as possible to preserve freshness.

Harvesting

- Most crops can be harvested more than once so keep up with gathering at proper maturity
- Carefully handle produce after harvesting to avoid bruising or damage which can cause decay
- Keep an eye on your plants for signs of yellowing leaves or possible diseases while harvesting

Harvesting

- It takes practice and experience to know exactly when your vegetables will be at their peak
- Harvest at the right time and you are sure to have a kitchen full of flavorful, nutritional veggies!

Cucumbers



- Planted February -April
- Time to harvest =
 - 50 to 65 days (from seed)
 - 40 to 50 days (from transplant)
- Pounds yield per 100'
 - 100 lbs.

Cucumbers



- Cucumbers are best when slightly immature, just as the spine softens and before the seeds become half-size
- This will vary with variety
- Most varieties will be 1 ½" to 2 ½" in diameter, 5" to 8" long

Cucumbers



- Pickling cucumbers blocky and not as long
- Can be harvested while seeds are small, flesh is firm, and color is green.
- Refrigerate after harvesting

Squash



- Summer
 - Planted March to April
 - Time to Harvest =
 - 40 to 55 days (seed)
 - 35 to 40 days (transplant)
- Winter
 - Planted March to August
 - Time to Harvest =
 - 80 to 110 days (seed)
 - 70 to 90 days (transplant)

Squash



- Summer Squash
 - Harvest when young and tender
 - Skin should be easily penetrated with thumbnail
 - Can be harvested when large end is one to 2 1/4 inches in diameter

Squash



- Winter Squash
 - Can be harvested when rind is not easily dented by fingernail

Squash



- Pounds yield per 100'
 - Summer = 150 lbs.
 - Winter = 300 lbs.
- Summer Squash
 - refrigerate after harvesting
- Winter Squash
 - Store at room temperature

Peppers



- Planted February to April
 - Time to Harvest =
 - 80 to 100 days (seed)
 - 60 to 80 days (transplant)
- Pounds yield per 100'
 - 50 lbs.

Peppers



- Hot Peppers
 - Harvest as needed
 - Young green peppers are hotter than mature, colored ones
 - Harvest after pods reach full size

Peppers



- Sweet Peppers
 - Harvest when fruits are firm and full size
 - If red fruits are desired, leave on plant until red color develops

Peppers



- Refrigerate after harvesting
- For long-term storage, pull fruit late in the season and hang to dry in a warm, well-ventilated place.

Tomatoes



- Planted February to April
 - Time to Harvest =
 - 90 to 110 days (seed)
 - 75 to 90 days (transplant)
- Pounds yield per 100'
 - 200 lbs.

Tomatoes



- Harvest when fruits are uniformly red, but before end softens
- Ripe fruit should sink in water
- Vine-ripened tomatoes are the sweetest, but tomatoes will ripen off the vine if picked green

Tomatoes



- Green tomatoes, harvested before frost, should be wrapped in newspaper and kept at 55- 70 F
- Tomatoes stored in this manor should last 3 to 5 weeks
- Be sure to inspect for ripeness each week

Tomatoes



- Store at room temperature after harvesting

What did we learn?

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Thank You!

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