

Eggplant

"Gleaming skin; a plump elongated shape: the eggplant is a vegetable you'd want to caress with your eyes and fingers, even if you didn't know its luscious flavor." — Roger Verge, founding father of nouvelle cuisine



Benefits and nutritional information:

- Eggplants have an impressive nutrient profile, rich in vitamins, minerals and powerful antioxidants..
- Being high in fiber and low in calories, they are a perfect for weight loss
- Eggplants are an excellent substitute for meat in vegetarian/vegan diets.

Starting:

- Eggplant optimally needs a long season of 80-plus degree days. In our area smaller fruited types will be more successful than the larger ones.
- To grow the heat-loving eggplant in our cool climate, it must be started indoors if using seeds.
- Seedlings need to be **hardened off** before planting outdoors.

When to plant:

- Ideally, seedlings will be held indoors until outdoor soil temperature has reached 65 degrees. Like its cousin the tomato, eggplants planted in soil that's too cold are more prone to **blossom end rot**.

Thinning, training

- Space eggplant 24 to 36 inches apart.
- Eggplant should be staked to prevent them from toppling over.

Signs of over-watering, nutrient deficiency

- While eggplant require a steady supply of moisture, soggy soil will increase the

Pests and pest controls

Eggplant

- Eggplant seedlings are vulnerable to [verticillium wilt](#).
- Like their cousins, tomatoes, eggplant can be susceptible to [blight](#)
- [Flea beetles](#) are the worst of the insect pests
- [Powdery mildew](#)
- [Blossom end rot](#)

Harvesting

- Eggplant are ready to harvest when they have stopped growing and their skin becomes glossy.
- Mature eggplant will have soft, well-formed yet immature seeds when sliced open. Fruit with no visible seeds are not yet ripe and may taste bitter.



- Remove the fruit with shears or a knife, leaving a small portion of the stem attached.

Other resources and articles

- Good companion plants are beans, marigolds, peas, peppers, spinach, and thyme. Do not plant eggplants near fennel.