



How To: HARVESTING PRODUCE

This chart offers harvesting instructions for common produce. Additionally, find the days to maturity, in a seed catalog or online, for each of your crop varieties. Days to maturity indicates the average amount of time after planting until the crop is ready to harvest.

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Harvest Instructions</i>	<i>Harvest Tool</i>
ASPARAGUS	FULL HARVEST BEGINS IN THE ASPARAGUS BED'S THIRD YEAR. ONCE SPEARS ARE ABOUT 8" TALL, BEND UNTIL THE SPEAR SNAPS. HARVEST FOR A SIX WEEK PERIOD, THEN LET SPEARS/FERNS GROW FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON.	HAND
BEAN, DRY	WHEN PODS TURN BROWN AND LEATHERY, PULL PODS OR PLANTS AND BRING INSIDE. WHEN SHELLS ARE BRITTLE, BREAK OPEN.	HAND
BEAN, GREEN	PULL BEANS FROM THE PLANT JUST AS PODS BEGIN TO SWELL WITH SEEDS. HARVEST THOROUGHLY AND REGULARLY TO ENCOURAGE EXTENDED PRODUCTION.	HAND
BEET	GRASP LEAVES BY ROOTS AND PULL FROM THE GROUND WHEN BEETS ARE 1.5-3" IN DIAMETER.	HAND
BLACKBERRY	PULL GENTLY ON PLUMP, DARKLY COLORED BERRIES. THEY SHOULD SEPARATE FROM THE PLANT EASILY.	HAND
BLUEBERRY	PULL GENTLY WHEN BERRIES ARE DARK BLUE AND SEPARATE EASILY FROM THE PLANT.	HAND
BROCCOLI	CUT STEM 6" BELOW THE CENTRAL FLOWER HEAD TO REMOVE. GREEN FLOWER BUDS SHOULD BE SWELLING BUT THE HEAD STILL FIRM. MOST PLANTS WILL CONTINUE TO PRODUCE SMALLER SIDE SHOOTS WHICH SHOULD BE HARVESTED REGULARLY.	KNIFE
BRUSSELS SPROUT	WHEN THE LOWER SPROUTS ARE ½" IN DIAMETER, PINCH OUT THE ROSETTE OF SEVERAL SMALL LEAVES AT THE TOP OF THE PLANT. AFTER ABOUT 4 WEEKS, ALL OF THE SPROUTS WILL BE FULLY FORMED AND CAN BE PULLED FROM THE PLANT.	HAND
CABBAGE	WHEN THE HEAD IS FIRM TO THE GRASP, CUT IT FROM THE PLANT.	KNIFE
CARROT	WHEN THE CARROT TOPS ARE ABOUT A FOOT HIGH AND THE ROOTS DEVELOP DEEP COLORING, LOOSEN THE SOIL AND PULL FROM THE GROUND.	SPADING FORK OR TROWEL
CAULIFLOWER	WHEN HEAD BEGINS TO DEVELOP, GATHER OUTER LEAVES OVER THE HEAD AND TIE WITH STRING TO PRESERVE WHITE CURD COLOR. CUT 6" BELOW THE BASE OF THE HEAD WHEN IT IS DESIRED SIZE AND CURDS ARE STILL FIRM.	KNIFE
CORN, SWEET	WHEN THE SILKS EXTENDING OUT THE TIP OF THE EAR TURN BROWN AND BEGIN TO DRY, PULL EARS DOWNWARD FROM THE STALK. THEY WILL SNAP OFF.	HAND
CUCUMBER	MATURE CUCUMBERS SHOULD LOOK FULL BUT NOT PUFFY. SNIP FROM THE PLANT, LEAVING AN INCH OF STEM ON THE CUCUMBER. HARVEST THOROUGHLY AND REGULARLY TO ENCOURAGE EXTENDED PRODUCTION.	GARDEN SCISSORS
EGGPLANT	AS THE FRUITS REACH MATURE SIZE, LOOK FOR A GLOSSY SHEEN ON THE SKIN. (IF IT IS DULL, IT IS OVERRIPE.) CLIP THE WOODY STEM ABOUT AN INCH FROM THE FRUIT. NOTE THAT EGGPLANT PLANTS MAY HAVE SPINES.	GARDEN SCISSORS
GARLIC	IN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY, HARVEST WHEN THE PLANT'S 3-4 LOWEST LEAVES ARE YELLOW OR BROWN AND WILTED. THE TOP 5-6 LEAVES WILL STILL BE GREEN. USE A SPADING FORK TO UNDERMINE THE GARLIC AND LOOSEN THE SOIL. PULL, BRUSH OFF CLUMPS OF SOIL, AND DRY IN A DARK, WELL VENTILATED LOCATION.	SPADING FORK
GRAPE	WHEN FULLY RIPE, GRAPES DEVELOP A WHITISH COATING. TASTE ONE FOR SWEETNESS, AND LOOK FOR THE SEEDS TO HAVE CHANGED FROM GREEN TO BROWN.	HAND
KALE, CHARD, COLLARDS	WHEN PLANTS ARE ABOUT A FOOT TALL, BEGIN HARVESTING THE OUTER LEAVES, LEAVING THE SMALLER CENTRAL LEAVES TO GROW. TO HARVEST, GRASP THE BOTTOM OF A LEAF AND PULL DOWNWARD ON IT, TWISTING AWAY FROM THE MAIN STEM.	HAND
LEEKs	WHEN STEMS HAVE REACHED AT LEAST 1" DIAMETER, UNDERMINE WITH A SPADING FORK AND PULL LEEKS FROM THE LOOSENED GROUND.	SPADING FORK
LETTUCE, HEAD	HARVEST LETTUCE IN THE MORNING/EVENING OR DURING COOL WEATHER. WHEN THE HEAD IS FULL AND FIRM, CUT THE STEM AT GROUND LEVEL. LETTUCE THAT DEVELOPS A SEED STALK TASTES BITTER.	KNIFE



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MELON, ROUGH SKINNED	TUG LIGHTLY ON THE MELON – IT WILL SLIP FROM THE VINE WHEN IT IS RIPE. ALSO, LOOK FOR THE RIND COLOR TO CHANGE, AND SNIFF FOR A SWEET AROMA.	HAND
MELON, SMOOTH SKINNED	FIND THE TENDRIL NEAREST THE POINT ON THE VINE WHERE THE FRUIT STEM ATTACHES. WHEN IT IS BROWNING/DEAD, THE MELON IS RIPE. CUT THE STEM ABOUT AN INCH FROM THE FRUIT.	GARDEN SCISSORS
OKRA	CLIP PODS FROM THE PLANT WHEN THEY ARE 3-4" LONG. HARVEST THOROUGHLY AND REGULARLY TO ENCOURAGE EXTENDED PRODUCTION. WEAR GLOVES TO PROTECT HANDS FROM SPINES.	GARDEN SCISSORS
ONION	FOR STORAGE: WHEN THE ONION TOPS HAVE FALLEN OVER, PULL THE ONIONS FROM THE GROUND AND ALLOW TO DRY IN THE SUN FOR AT LEAST A WEEK BEFORE REMOVING TOPS. FOR FRESH EATING: PULL ANYTIME.	HAND
PEA	WHEN THE PEAS FILL OUT THE POD, BUT BEFORE IT BECOMES WHITE AND TOUGH, PULL FROM THE VINE. HARVEST THOROUGHLY AND REGULARLY TO ENCOURAGE PRODUCTION.	HAND
PEPPER, BELL	MOST PEPPERS BEGIN GREEN, THEN RIPEN TO A MATURE COLOR. (PEPPERS CAN BE EATEN IN THE GREEN STAGE.) WHEN DESIRED SIZE AND COLOR, CUT THE FRUIT FROM THE STEM, LEAVING ABOUT 1" OF STEM ATTACHED.	GARDEN SCISSORS
POPCORN	WHEN HUSKS HAVE DRIED AND KERNELS ARE HARD AND GLOSSY, PULL EARS FROM STALK. HUSK AND HANG TO DRY FOR UP TO SIX WEEKS BEFORE STORING.	HAND
POTATO	AFTER FOLIAGE HAS DIED BACK BUT BEFORE THE FIRST FROST, CAREFULLY DIG POTATOES FROM THE GROUND. PLACE IN A COOL, DARK PLACE TO DRY BEFORE STORING.	SPADING FORK
RADISH & TURNIP	WHEN ROOTS REACH 1" (RADISH) – 2" (TURNIP) DIAMETER, GRASP LEAVES DIRECTLY ABOVE ROOT AND PULL FROM GROUND. TURNIPS CAN REACH LARGER DIAMETERS BEFORE HARVEST.	HAND
RASPBERRY	MATURE RASPBERRIES ARE FIRM, DEEPLY COLORED, AND EASILY REMOVED FROM THE CANES. THE WHITE CENTER PORTION SHOULD REMAIN ON THE CANE.	HAND
RHUBARB	WHEN THE STALKS HAVE REACHED ABOUT 1" IN LENGTH, PULL AND SLIGHTLY TWIST THEM TO REMOVE. HARVEST ONLY A THIRD OF THE PLANT AT A TIME AND DISCONTINUE HARVEST BY JULY 4, ALLOWING IT TO GROW UNDISTURBED.	HAND
SALAD MIX	WHEN THE SALAD MIX IS 4-6" TALL, CUT THE TOP 2-4" AND LEAVE THE BOTTOM 2" TO REGROW. HARVEST EVERY 1-2 WEEKS UNTIL BITTER.	KNIFE OR GARDEN SCISSORS
SCALLIONS/ GREEN ONIONS	WHEN SCALLIONS HAVE REACHED ¼"-1/2" IN DIAMETER, LOOSEN SOIL AND PULL.	SPADING FORK OR TROWEL
SQUASH, SUMMER	SUMMER SQUASH IS BEST WHEN YOUNG, SMALL-MEDIUM SIZE, AND SKINS ARE TENDER. CUT STEMS ABOUT 1" FROM FRUIT. BE CAREFUL NOT TO DAMAGE/SCRATCH.	KNIFE
SQUASH, WINTER	WHEN STEM IS DRYING AND SKIN IS HARDENING BUT BEFORE A HEAVY FROST, CUT STEMS ABOUT 1" FROM FRUIT. FOR STORAGE: CURE HARVESTED SQUASH IN THE SUN FOR 5-7 DAYS.	GARDEN SCISSORS
SPINACH	WHEN LEAVES REACH DESIRED SIZE, CUT OR SNAP THEM OFF NEAR THE BASE OF THE PLANT.	HAND, KNIFE, OR GARDEN SCISSORS
STRAWBERRY	PINCH THE STEMS OF FULLY RED BERRIES (NO GREEN OR WHITE ON THEIR TIPS).	HAND
SWEET POTATO	BEFORE THE FIRST FROST, IDENTIFY THE CENTER OF THE PLANT AND UNDERMINE, LOOSENING THE SOIL. PULL THE SWEET POTATOES FROM THE GROUND.	SPADING FORK
SWISS CHARD	WHEN THEY REACH THE DESIRED SIZE, CUT THE OUTER LEAVES NEAR THE BASE OF THE PLANT.	KNIFE
TOMATO	WHEN THE TOMATO HAS SOFTENED AND THE COLOR IS DEEP AND CONSISTENT, GENTLY PULL THE FRUIT FROM THE PLANT.	HAND
ZUCCHINI	ZUCCHINI IS BEST WHEN YOUNG, SMALL-MEDIUM SIZE, AND SKINS ARE TENDER. CUT STEMS ABOUT 1" FROM FRUIT. BE CAREFUL NOT TO DAMAGE/SCRATCH.	KNIFE