



Plant Care Guide

FOOD WELL ALLIANCE X WHOLESOME WAVE GEORGIA



STARTING YOUR CONTAINER GARDEN

Instructions for Transplanting Your Seedlings

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bucket (with holes drilled in bottom) or other semi-permeable container at least 5 gallons
- Soil/compost mix
- Seedlings
- Trowel
- Gloves

CARE

- Say something nice to your plant! (optional, but fun).
- Place container in a sunny location (depending on plant needs) and water/check on your plant regularly. See the plant-specific guides for more details on how to treat your seedlings well!

INSTRUCTIONS

- On a surface that won't be hard to clean (i.e. not your carpet), pour/shovel soil into buckets until they are filled within an inch of the top. Push soil down gently and fill again to the same height. Soil will settle over time, and you want your plants to be close to the surface of your bucket.
- In the center of your bucket, dig out a small hole about 2x the size of the soil around your new seedling. Move the soil to the sides of the bucket, rather than taking it out.
- When soil is loose, remove your plant from its plastic container. Gently press the sides of your seedling's container to loosen it and then slide out the seedling (don't pull it out or you risk breaking the stem off from the roots).
- Place seedling roots into your hole and gently scrape soil back around it. You want all the roots to be completely covered by soil, and the stem/leaves to be exposed. No need to pat down the soil after planting - loose soil allows water to enter more easily. Make sure your plant isn't sitting in a low-point, you want the soil to be relatively flat.
- Then water your plant! Taking your water container pour about 24 oz. of water evenly around the entire base of the plant, allowing the soil to settle in and make contact



LETTUCE

BASIC CARE

SUN

- Full exposure for ideally at least 6 hours a day
- Lettuce can usually grow in 4-6 hours of sun, but it's not ideal.

WATER

- Water regularly, especially when young, to maintain consistent soil moisture.
- To water, pour or spray gently around the base of the lettuce.
- Lettuce leaves will start to look wilted if they need more water.

HARVESTING

Leaf Lettuce

- Harvest outside leaves (leaving smaller leaves to continue growing) when they are large enough to eat, but still young.
- Leaves will get tougher as they get older.
- To remove leaves, pinch or cut gently at the base of the leaf.
- Pulling too hard may damage the plant.

Head Lettuce

- Lettuce that forms a head can be harvested when the center feels firm.
- Head lettuce can be harvested by cutting the head at the base of the plant.
- Some varieties may have a second harvest if you cut them about an inch above the soil surface.

STORING

- Lettuce is best eaten fresh!
- If you need to store it, make sure it's dry and store it in a loose container in the fridge.

COMMON PROBLEMS

PESTS

Lettuce has many similar pests to other leafy greens - aphids, whiteflies and snails/slugs.

MILDEW

Powdery mildew can also be an issue.



COLLARD GREENS

Collard Greens are closely related to kale, brussel sprouts, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. Much of their planting and care will be the same. Harvest will vary, but collards and kale both have the continuous leaf harvest. They are incredibly cold-tolerant and, if planted in the Fall, will grow through the Spring.

BASIC CARE

PLANTING

- Can be planted from seeds or seedlings. If you're getting closer to frost, seedlings will have more of an advantage.
- Plant collard greens in rich soil.
- Collard greens can also establish deep roots, so it's important to have a large enough container or loose earth when planting.
- When growing plants for the leaves, it is best to add organic matter to the soil (compost), especially if you're planting into soil that has been used for summer crops.

SUN

Full exposure for at least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Water regularly to maintain moist soil. - If you have access to mulch, a layer around the base of the plant can help maintain even moisture.
- Water around the base of the plant, avoiding leaves if possible.

HARVESTING

- Leaves from the collard plant can be harvested very young, especially if you are thinning out your planting.
- Once the plant is more established, harvest larger leaves by cutting them off at the base. As long as you continue to leave young leaves, you'll have a continuous harvest throughout the winter.
- Don't let your leaves get too large, or they will get more bitter (unless you enjoy that!)

STORING

- Collard green leaves do not store well raw, so harvest as needed. If you have more than you can handle, they can be cooked and frozen for later.
- To preserve raw leaves, you can blanch them for 2-3 minutes, cool, drain and freeze (there are lots of good videos on YouTube!)

COMMON PROBLEMS

HEAT WILL MAKE COLLARD GREENS BOLT

Keeping even moisture and planting them to receive mostly morning/early afternoon sun can help them continue to thrive as temperatures increase in the Spring.

SOIL-BORNE DISEASES

These are common in the cabbage family. Rotate your leafy greens to different spots each year to help avoid infection.

INSECT PESTS

- The cabbage family can also be plagued by several insect pests, including aphids, cabbage worms and cabbage loppers. Their thick leaves can be something of a deterrent, but insecticidal soap can also help if the infestation is too large.
- Planting garlic around your greens can help deter pests (including rabbits/deer/voles) - and, bonus, they will eventually taste great together!



CABBAGE

Cabbage is a member of the family that includes kale, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts. Much of the care and problems for these plants will be the same, although the harvest and storage will differ. There are many varieties of cabbage, but they can be grouped as purple or green cabbage, and grow more or less the same. Your seed packet or seedling tag should include specific information on how long to wait before harvesting your cabbage.

BASIC CARE

PLANTING

- Can be planted from seeds or seedlings. If you're getting closer to frost, seedlings will have more of an advantage.
- Cabbage needs lots of nutrients, so make sure soil is supplemented with compost or other source of organic material.
- Soil should drain well - standing water can cause the cabbage heads to split
- Cabbages can get quite large and need to be spaced accordingly. Cabbages planted closer together will have smaller heads than those with ample space.

SUN

Full exposure for at least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Water regularly to maintain moist soil. - If you have access to mulch, a layer around the base of the plant can help maintain even moisture.
- Water around the base of the plant, avoiding leaves if possible.

HARVESTING

- Harvest cabbage heads when they are firm and the desired size. Seed packets and seedling tags often offer a description of the anticipated size and days to maturity.
- Carefully cut cabbage head at the base (above ground) with a sharp knife when mature. Unlike collard greens, cabbage will only be harvested once.
- Remove roots from ground after harvesting head.

STORING

- If damp, let dry before storing
- Can be stored in the refrigerator, wrapped or in a container, for up to two weeks

COMMON PROBLEMS

SOIL-BORNE DISEASES

These are common in the cabbage family. Rotate your leafy greens to different spots each year to help avoid infection.

INSECT PESTS

- The cabbage family can also be plagued by several insect pests, including aphids, cabbage worms and cabbage loppers. Their thick leaves can be something of a deterrent, but insecticidal soap can also help if the infestation is too large.
- Planting garlic around your greens can help deter pests (including rabbits/deer/voles) - and, bonus, they will eventually taste great together!

PLANT DISEASE

If you see plant disease during the growing season, discard your soil when you remove the plant.



BROCCOLI

BASIC CARE

PLANTING

- Can be planted from seeds or seedlings. If you're getting closer to frost, seedlings will have more of an advantage.
- Plant broccoli in rich soil, adding compost or organic fertilizers can help improve plant production.
- Unlike other members of the cabbage family, broccoli is grown for its flower heads, not its leaves.
- Plant broccoli a good distance (generally 3 feet) apart, to avoid smaller heads.

SUN

Full exposure for at least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Water regularly to maintain moist soil - If you have access to mulch, a layer around the base of the plant can help maintain even moisture
- Water around the base of the plant, avoiding leaves if possible

HARVESTING

- Harvest broccoli when the head is fully grown, but the buds are still tight. If you see yellow flowers, harvest immediately.
- Cut head from the stem, keeping at least 6 inches of stem
- Once you have cut the main shoot, you can allow any side shoots that remain to continue maturing. They probably won't get as big as the main head, but can provide a second harvest.

STORING

Let dry, then store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days

COMMON PROBLEMS

SOIL-BORNE DISEASES

These are common in the cabbage family. Rotate your leafy greens to different spots each year to help avoid infection.

INSECT PESTS

- The cabbage family can also be plagued by several insect pests, including aphids, cabbage worms and cabbage loopers. Their thick leaves can be something of a deterrent, but insecticidal soap can also help if the infestation is too large.
- Planting garlic around your greens can help deter pests (including rabbits/deer/voles) - and, bonus, they will eventually taste great together!

PLANT DISEASE

If you see plant disease during the growing season, discard your soil when you remove the plant.

NITROGEN DEFICIENCY

Yellowing leaves can be a sign of insufficient nitrogen. Look for a fertilizer that is high in nitrogen and low in phosphorus.



HERBS

BASIC CARE

Disclaimer: Different herbs have different needs! While many of them are hardy plants, it's good to see if there are instructions on your plant tag and follow those. You can also look up the specific needs of your herbs online.

Annuals Vs. Perennials

- Annual plants will be planted, harvested and removed from your garden in one year or growing season. Common annual herbs include basil, calendula, chamomile, cilantro and dill
- Perennial plants will persist for multiple years or growing seasons. Their leafy growth might die back in the winter, but if you don't pull them out, you should see new growth in the spring! Common perennial herbs include chives, echinacea, fennel, lavender, oregano, peppermint, rosemary, sage and thyme.

SUN

- Full exposure for at least 6 hours a day
- Some will prefer a little afternoon shade

WATER

- Water regularly, especially when young, to maintain consistent soil moisture.
- To water, pour or spray gently around the base of the plant.
- Many perennial herbs are fairly drought tolerant (or if you forget to water them), but some, like basil, like constant water and will wilt quickly if not watered regularly.

STORING

- Fresh herbs can be stored in the fridge for a few days after harvest.
- Many herbs can also be dried for longer storage. Herbs can be dried by hanging them in a cool, dry place or by cooking them at low heat in the oven.

COMMON PROBLEMS

THEY'RE RESILIENT!

Herbs tend to be pretty resilient plants.

PESTS REPELLENT

Some, including the allium family (garlic, chives, onions), can actually help deter pests and can be planted around more susceptible plants like lettuce and kale.

OVERWATERING

Overwatering may be a problem for some herbs.



EGGPLANT

BASIC CARE

SUN

Full exposure for at least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Water regularly, especially when young, to maintain consistent soil moisture.
- To water: pour or spray gently around the base of the eggplant, not on the leaves.
- If you have access to mulch, a layer on top can help keep moisture in the soil.
- Do not overwater - if the plant sits in water, it can cause disease.

HARVESTING

- Each eggplant variety will have a different size/age of maturity. Don't let the eggplant stay on the plant after it reaches maturity or it will start to get tough.
 - > Smaller eggplants will be more tender and sweet, and can be harvested before they're fully mature.
- To harvest: Use clippers or scissors to remove the eggplant between the fruit and the branch it's growing off of. Pulling the eggplant risks damaging the plant.

STORING

- Eggplants won't store very long, so eat them when you harvest them!
- If you need to store, keep in the refrigerator for up to one week.

COMMON PROBLEMS

PLANTS NOT WATERED ENOUGH

Plants may have trouble establishing roots if they don't receive enough water when they're young. Water evenly and often to keep the soil soft for root growth.

EGGPLANT ROTTING ON THE PLANT

For eggplant fruit rotting on the plant before it's fully mature - remove any diseased fruits/plants, and harvest eggplants when younger to avoid rot.

BASIC CARE

If planting from seed, soak seeds for several hours to increase germination.

SUN

Full exposure for at least 8 hours a day

WATER

- Okra is very sun and heat tolerant, but should be watered regularly for continued production of pods, especially when young.
- Once they're a little more settled and mature, okra plants can go up to a week without water.

HARVESTING

- Okra should be ready to begin harvesting after 60-70 days.
- Wear gloves/long sleeves if possible, as most okra have tiny spines that irritate skin.
- Do not pull okra off, use scissors to cut just above the top of the pod.
- Harvest the pods when they are 2-3 inches long and not yet hard.
 - > If you allow pods to stay on the plant too long, they can be dried and saved for seeds.
 - > It is better to harvest small than too large, as pods get woody.

STORING

- Eat immediately! Young okra pods are delicious raw, but all okra pods should be cooked soon after harvesting to keep them from getting slimy.
- If you have too much okra to eat immediately, they can be stored in a bag in the freezer until you're ready to use them.

COMMON PROBLEMS

GROWING OKRA FOR MULTIPLE YEARS

If you grow okra for multiple years, grow it in a different container or row the following year for soil health.

PLANT STOPS PRODUCING (HOT WEATHER)

Outside temperatures above 95F can kill off pollen, which means that okra pods won't form on the plant. If your plant isn't producing pods or the flowers keep dying off during a heat spell, control other stress factors by giving plants regular, even water. The plant should start producing again once it gets a little cooler.

PLANT STOPS PRODUCING (COLD WEATHER)

Okra do not like cold weather. Okra seeds won't germinate in soil less than 65F and established okra plants don't like it when it gets cold outside. Once they stop producing in the fall, save and dry pods for seeds and pull out the okra plant.

BASIC CARE

SUN

At least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Pour water directly into the soil at the base of the plant, not on the leaves or fruits
- Keep soil consistently moist but not overly wet
- In Summer: plants will need almost daily watering

STAKING/CAGING

As your pepper plant grows, loosely secure it to a stake or stick to help the plant grow vertically and support the weight of its fruit. This can also be done with a tomato cage.

HARVESTING

- Peppers are ready to harvest when they reach full size (about 3-4 inches), have a firm skin and are bright yellow in color
- Banana Peppers will continue to turn red as they ripen, and can still be eaten
- To keep from pulling entire bunches off your plant, use scissors or a kitchen knife to cut peppers off the plant as you need them
- If you continue to care for your plant, you should be able to harvest peppers for most of the summer and into early Fall

STORING

- Rinse in cool water, allow to dry thoroughly and store in the fridge
- Peppers that are still a bit green (instead of full yellow) can be left on a counter/table to continue ripening
- Avoid moisture when storing, it will make peppers rot more quickly

COMMON PROBLEMS

LEAVES CURLING/WILTING & DISCOLORING

- This may be caused by high heat or conditions, if the plant is on asphalt/concrete, try moving it somewhere that carries less heat.
- Water evenly and regularly, pouring water around the base of the plant when the top inch of soil is dry (might need to be done every day in the summer).

INSECT PESTS

Peppers generally don't have a lot of insect pests, most can be treated with insecticidal soap or by removing the insects by hand if they are larger.

MY PEPPER MADE ME CRY

- Hot peppers generally have capsaicin, a compound that helps keep pests away but also can make your eyes water and your throat burn.
- To avoid unnecessary tears, consider wearing gloves when harvesting peppers, don't touch your face and wash hands immediately after handling or slicing peppers.

WINTER IS COMING

Peppers do not handle frost well. In the fall, if weather reports predict below-freezing temperatures, you should bring your plant indoors for the night or remove all the peppers before the freeze.



TOMATOES

BASIC CARE

SUN

At least 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Pour water directly into the soil at the base of the plant, not on the leaves or fruits.
- Keep soil consistently moist but not overly wet.
 - > To test: push finger one inch deep into soil, if dry, add water.
- In summer, plants will need almost daily watering.

STAKING/CAGING

As your tomato plant grows, loosely secure it to a stake or stick to help the plant grow vertically and support the weight of its fruit. This can also be done with a tomato cage.

HARVESTING

- To safely remove a tomato from the vine, hold the plant just above the fruit and use your other hand to gently pull the tomato. You can twist the stem a little to encourage it to break, if needed.
- Many gardeners prefer to harvest when the tomato is mostly red, but you may need to harvest earlier if pests are a problem.
- Tomatoes can ripen off the vine, so you can harvest them when they are a size you like and allow them to ripen indoors.
- Wash tomatoes thoroughly with water before eating.

STORING

- Tomatoes that need to ripen can be stored on the counter.
- Tomatoes that are perfectly ripe should be eaten immediately!
- If they can't be eaten immediately, store them in the fridge to prevent continued ripening (and rotting!)

COMMON PROBLEMS

INSECT PESTS

- Insects: remove by hand, or try insecticidal soap (check out the UGA Extension website for more details).
- Squirrels: Consider getting a net/covering for the tomatoes to keep them away.
- Rots: tomatoes are affected by several pathogens in the soil. To prevent the spread of these pathogens, don't plant tomatoes in the same container twice without changing out the soil.

TOMATO IS NO LONGER PRODUCING

Tomatoes are annuals that will not produce again once they stop. Remove the tomato plant from the bucket. The soil should be good for planting again the following year, but it would be best to plant something different (preferably not in the tomato family).



CUCUMBERS

BASIC CARE

SUN

- Full exposure 6-8 hours a day
- Some afternoon shading in hot summer months can reduce plant stress.

WATER

- Pour water directly into the soil at the base of the plant, not on the leaves or fruits.
- Keep soil consistently moist but not overly wet.
 - > To test: push finger one inch deep into soil, if dry, add water.
- In summer, plants will need almost daily watering.

TRELLIS: YOUR CUCUMBERS NEED SUPPORT!

In order to grow vining cucumbers, you'll need a way for them to climb. Trellises can be constructed from garden stakes and chicken wire, or you can get creative with other materials.

HARVESTING

- Generally ready to harvest 50-70 days from planting
- Cucumbers are ready to harvest when they are green, firm, and a size that fits the variety and your use for them. Don't let them get too large or allow them to get yellow on the vine.
- To harvest: using scissors or shears, cut the vine just above fruit. Don't pull - it can damage the plant.

STORING

Cucumbers are mostly water, so they will spoil quickly if not stored well. Eat or refrigerate after harvesting. Offer to your neighbors if you have too many to consume before they start to go bad!

COMMON PROBLEMS

FLOWERING BUT NOT FRUITING

Pollination isn't successful. Cucumbers have male and female flowers and sometimes when the plant is young, they don't sync up in their flowering. As the plant matures, you should get more successful pollination.

INSECT PESTS: SQUASH BUGS & PICKLE WORMS

- You'll see signs of nibbling on your leaves and mining of your cucumbers. To help prevent, plant cucumbers away from squash and melons.
- Harvest cucumbers young if pickle worms are eating your crop (otherwise they are likely to get mined).



SUMMER SQUASH

Zucchini, Yellow Straight Neck, or Crooked Neck

BASIC CARE

SUN

Full exposure 6-8 hours a day

WATER

- Pour water directly into the soil at the base of the plant, not on the leaves or fruits.
- Keep soil consistently moist but not overly wet.
 - > To test: push finger one inch deep into soil, if dry, add water.
- In summer, plants will need almost daily watering.

HARVESTING

- Summer squash normally mature in 35-45 days.
- Harvest squash when they are young for best flavor - look for squash that are about 4-6 inches long and about 1.5 inches thick, depending on variety.
- To harvest, use scissors or shears to cut the stem just above the fruit. Avoid temptation to break off the fruit, it doesn't always separate cleanly.
- Remove fruits as soon as they are ripe to avoid having them take moisture and nutrients from the plant.

STORING

Squash can be stored in a cool location for 2-3 days, but is best eaten soon after harvesting.

COMMON PROBLEMS

SQUASH FLOWERING BUT NOT FRUITING

You may have to hand-pollinate them! Check out this informative [video/guide](#). You can be a matchmaker for squash!

SQUASH BUGS

They'll suck your leaves dry and can be removed by hand, but are more easily controlled if caught early.

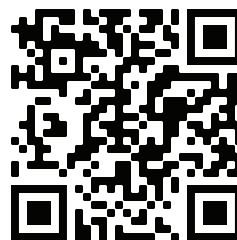
SQUASH ROTTING ON VINES

They'll suck your leaves dry and can be removed by hand, but are more easily controlled if caught early.



**WATCH THIS
PLANT CARE
TUTORIAL!**

*Courtesy of the Food Well Alliance
Garden Team*



**WE WANT TO SEE YOUR PROGRESS!
USE THE HASHTAG**

#GEORGIAPLANT2PLATE

TO SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA!