Cucumbers

Cucumbers are eaten fresh or preserved as pickles. They mature quickly, and newer compact varieties allow them to be grown in small areas. The grower should cage or trellis the plants.

Grow it

Varieties
- Slicing: Suyo, Sweet Slice, and Salad Bush
- Pickling: Carolina and Calypso
- Slicing types can also be picked young and used as pickling cucumbers.

Soil Preparation
- Spade the soil to 8 to 12 inches deep, mixing an inch of compost into the soil.
- Work the soil into beds 4 to 6 inches high and at least 36 inches apart.

Planting
- Do not plant cucumbers until the danger of frost has passed and the soil begins to warm.
- Cucumbers are a vine crop requiring space. The vines can reach 6 to 8 feet long. You can train them on fences, trellises or cages.
- Plant them in rows.
- Use a hoe or stick to make a small furrow about 1 inch deep down the center of each row.
- Drop 3 or 4 seeds in groups every 12 to 14 inches down the row. Lightly cover them with about ½ inch of soil.
- Remove all but one plant after the seeds sprout. This keeps the plant from being overcrowded.

Fertilizing
- Cucumbers require plenty of fertilizer.

- Scatter 1 cup of a complete fertilizer such as 15-5-10 or 2 to 3 cups of organic fertilizer for each 10 feet of row. Work the fertilizer into the soil leaving the surface smooth.
- When the vines are 10 to 12 inches long, apply about ½ cup of synthetic or 1 to 1 ½ cups of organic fertilizer for each 10 feet of row.

Watering
- Soak the plants well with water weekly if it does not rain.

Care During the Season
- Keep the cucumbers as weed free as possible.
- Cucumbers produce two kinds of flowers—male and female.
- Male flowers open first and drop off.
- Female flowers form the cucumber, which remains after the bloom falls off.

Insects & Diseases
- Watch for insect feeding, but pests and diseases should be minimal.

Harvesting
- Harvest cucumbers when they reach the desired size and are green in color.
- Do not wait until they turn yellow. Yellow cucumbers are over mature and will have a strong flavor.
Cucumbers are usually eaten raw, but they may also be sautéed and served as a warm side dish with a bit of chopped dill.

Cucumbers are a low calorie food and a recommended source of Vitamin C.

They are free of fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture