

Cucumber - Armenian

Cucumis sativus

Family: Cucumis sativus (Gourd family) includes melons, watermelon, gourds, pumpkins, and squash.

Native: Southeast, Asia

General Cucumber Information: Cucumbers can be classified into two categories, slicing and pickling types. Pickling types have thinner skins and tend to produce earlier than slicers. Slicing cucumbers have thicker skins that are generally removed before eating. Pickling cucumbers can be eaten like slicers, but slicers cannot be pickled (skin too thick). Cucumbers are available as either 1) monoecious, both male and female flowers being on any given plant or 2) gynoecious, with only female flowers on plants. Some gynoecious varieties require a pollinator which is usually included with the gynoecious seed and marked with a dye. Other gynoecious varieties don't require a pollinator. Cucumbers produce a chemical called cucurbitacin which produces a bit of a bitter flavor and causes slight indigestion in some people. Varieties without this chemical are called "burpless".

Hardiness: Annual, warm season.

Plant & Variety Facts: Armenian cucumber is a slicing, monoecious, burpless cucumber. It does not need a pollinator. 8' vines. Sometimes called Yard Long cucumber or Snake cucumber.

Vegetable Description: 18" to 36" long, skinny, light green, shallow ridges.

When to Plant: *Outdoors:* Spring after average last day of frost AND when soil temperatures are warm, at least 65 degrees. Most cucumbers fail to set fruit above 95 degrees; Armenian cucumber is particularly heat tolerant and will fruit in hot summer climates where other cucumbers will not. *Indoors:* 4-6 weeks before last frost.

Optimal Growing Conditions: *Soil:* Light, rich, well drained, fertile soil. Lots of organic material. When cultivating for weeds, be careful roots are shallow. *Water:* Cucumbers have a shallow root system and therefore require regular moisture, at least 1.5" per week. Moisture is particularly important during flowering and fruiting, since 96% of the weight of a cucumber is made up of water. If not enough water, cucumbers will be curved or constricted (knots like too tight a belt). *Exposure:* Full sun. *Fertilizer:* 2-3 pounds of a 10-10-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet should be applied to soil before planting. Since root system is extensive, fertilize whole area - do not band fertilize.

Special Sowing & Germination Instructions: Plant in mounds or rows, as you prefer. If rows, plant every 4', thinning to 1 plant per foot. Mounds should be 4' apart with 6

seedlings on each mound thinned to 3 per mound. Another HIGHLY recommended method is to plant with a trellis. Cucumbers grow straighter and are easier to see when harvesting. Use row spacing and tie main stem to trellis with string or twist tie.

Harvesting - How & when: Do not let cucumbers get too big - vines stop producing if over mature cucumbers stay on vine. Constantly pick at correct size (or smaller!) Cut off vine, do not break off. Once picked, immediately immerse in cold water to disperse "field heat"; this increases quality and life of picked fruit.

In the kitchen

How to Store: Plastic bag in refrigerator for a week or two. Best eaten fresh.

How to Cook: Best eaten raw with dips, in soups, salads, or sandwiches. Sliced in sandwiches, add a touch of tarragon and pepper to add some zing.

Recipes: *Sweet & Sour Cucumbers.* Combine 3 cups peeled, thinly sliced cucumbers and 1 1/4 peeled and thinly sliced onion in large bowl. In small bowl, combine 2/3 cup vinegar, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp pepper. Blend well and pour over cucumbers. Chill at least 1 hour. Keeps a long time in refrigerator.

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Seedling



Date Seed
Planted:

(Write in date)
Days to Maturity: 85

Artist: Victoria Ekelund of Denver, Colorado loves the whole outdoors and does her best to share that glory in her paintings. She divides her time between raising her family, gardening, and painting.



Your last day of frost...

The last day of frost (32 degrees or less) is defined as "the first day in spring on which there is less than a 50% chance a frost will occur." This information is crucial when planting a garden. To find out your last day of frost, call your local independent garden center or your COUNTY Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service. Also inquire about the average date of the first fall frost.