

What can a garden grow?



eggplant

Eggplant or aubergine is grown for its edible fruit. Eggplant is the common name in North America, Australia and New Zealand. The fruit is widely used in cooking. It is related to the tomato and the potato. It was originally domesticated from the wild nightshade species, the thorn or bitter apple, probably with two independent domestications, one in South Asia and one in East Asia.

The eggplant is a delicate, tropical perennial often cultivated as a tender or half-hardy annual in temperate climates. The stem is often spiny. The flower is white to purple, with a five-lobed corolla and yellow stamens. The egg-shaped, glossy, purple fruit has white flesh with a meaty texture. The cut surface of the flesh rapidly turns brown when the fruit is cut open.

Botanically classified as a berry, the fruit contains numerous small, soft seeds that, though edible, taste bitter because they contain nicotinoid alkaloids like the related tobacco. For more info: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggplant>.

How to grow Eggplant?

You can direct sow eggplant in hot climates. In northern climates, start seeds indoors 8 weeks before the last frost date and transplant at least 2 weeks after the last frost date. Use black plastic to keep the ground warm before planting in cooler climates.

Eggplant does best in rich, slightly acidic, well-draining soil with compost added. Eggplants need to be spaced about 24" apart in rows at least 12" apart. Eggplant can be either grown from seed or transplanted. Normally, I buy transplants from my local nursery due to the long growing period. Eggplant thrives in hot, humid conditions.

Grow them under row covers in cool climates to increase the temperature around the plants. The plant will not set fruit where nighttime temperatures get below 65° F.

It is a good idea to mulch around the plants to help keep moisture and heat in the soil around the plants. Take care while weeding around young plants, so that you do not disturb the roots. Eggplant is a very heavy feeder, so side-dressing the plants with well-rotted compost or manure twice a month is encouraged. Some varieties of eggplant may become very large, and thus heavy. You may need to give the plant some support.

For more info: <http://www.veggiegardener.com/veggies/eggplant/>.



How to cook Eggplant?

Eggplant is a very unique plant for most home gardens and probably one of the lesser grown vegetables. The most famous recipe is in making eggplant parmesan, but they can be breaded and fried, baked, grilled, stewed, or used in dips.

For more info:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/1084/fruits-and-vegetables/vegetables/eggplant/>.