DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
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Agriculture and Natural Resources

FSA6001

Home Gardening Series

Guide to Vegetable Culture Fact Sheets

Craig R. Andersen
Associate Professor and
Extension Horticulture
Specialist - Vegetables

Fact sheets on the culture of vegetables have been developed as an easy-to-use guide to the culture, nutritional value, harvest and storage of specific food crops. The fact sheets are a summary of the wide range of information available. You may need to consult other materials for detailed information. The fact sheets should provide enough know-how to get a crop from seed to harvest.

Environmental Preferences

Light – Sunny (requires direct light at least 8 hours per day; prefers 10 hours per day).

Tolerates partial shade (will do well with fewer than 8 hours but at least 5 hours of sunshine per day).

Prefers shade or filtered light (more than 6 hours of direct sunlight may be harmful; but probably needs at least 3 to 4 hours of light per day).

Soil – Well-drained (water does not stand for more than 24 hours after a hard rain).

Deep (at least 8 to 12 inches of topsoil or loose subsoil; no shallow hardpan) loam (soil composed roughly of equal portions of clay and sand, with a reasonable amount of humus; good garden soils).

Fertility – Results of soil tests can be used to indicate the basic fertility level of soils; soil testing does not indicate nitrogen levels due to variability.

pH – Acidity or alkalinity of the soil; 7.0 is neutral, below 7.0 is acid, above 7.0 is alkaline.

Temperature – Approximate ranges of daily mean temperature preferred for optimum growth.

Moisture – Amount of rainfall or supplemental watering needed for optimum growth; more for sandy soils, less for clay.

Average (roughly 1 inch of water per week).

Moist (roughly 1 to 2 inches of water per week; soil should be well-drained).

Culture

Vegetable Cultivars – In most cases, suggested cultivars suitable for Arkansas growing conditions are given in each fact sheet.

Open-pollinated cultivars are cultivars whose seeds can be saved from year to year, but this practice is not recommended.

Hybrid cultivars are ones resulting from specific crosses and whose seeds cannot be saved for replanting next year.

Planting – Specific information needed to get plants started, such as when to seed, whether to start plants indoors, best transplant time, etc.

Spacing – Optimum distances between plants and rows.

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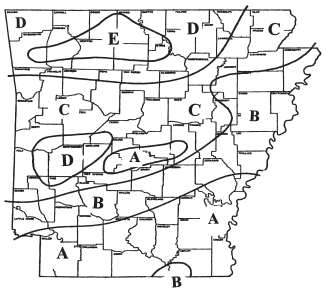
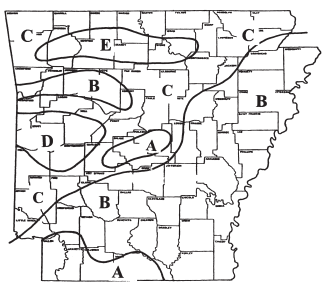
Spring



Fall



Frost Zones for Arkansas		
Zone	Mean Date of Last Spring Freeze	Mean Date of First Fall Freeze
A	March 20	November 15
B	March 27	November 7
C	April 1	October 30
D	April 10	October 24
E	April 20	October 20

Hardiness – See maps and hardiness chart above.

Very hardy perennial (can withstand winter extremes in most parts of Arkansas with only slight protection).

Hardy perennial (can withstand winters with protection in colder areas).

Hardy annual (can withstand frosts in spring and fall; may need protection from heavy frosts or freezing).

Half-hardy annual (can withstand light frosts but not heavy frosts or freezing).

Tender annual (frost will seriously damage plant tissue).

Very tender annual (cool nonfreezing temperatures will injure tissues; needs warm weather for growth).

Soil Testing – You will not know the exact amount of fertilizer your garden needs until you have your soil tested. Submit one pint of **air-dried** soil to your county Extension office for a free soil test analysis. See FSA2121, *Test Your Soil for Plant Food and Lime Needs*, for more information on soil testing.

Fertilizer Needs – Low, medium or heavy feeder (refers to relative levels of nutrient uptake from the soil; this information can be used to group similar types of plants so that fertilizers may be applied to sections of the garden according to plant needs).

Crop Feeders	Actual Nitrogen oz/100 sq ft	Actual Phosphorus oz/100 sq ft	Actual Potassium oz/100 sq ft
Light	1 oz	1 oz	1-3 oz
Medium	2 oz	1-3 oz	3-6 oz
Heavy	3 oz	3-6 oz	6-8 oz

Cultural Practices

General growing information is given. Proven methods for increasing production and/or decreasing pest problems are included. Unique growing suggestions may be included.

Common Problems

This section gives a general list of the most common diseases, insects and cultural problems of the crop in Arkansas. Identify the cause of the problem, review nonchemical and preventive control information, then refer to current pest management publications or contact your county Extension agent for specific chemical control information.

Harvesting and Storage

Days to Maturity – The approximate time the crop will take to grow before it should be harvested.

Harvest – Gives information on how to properly harvest the crop.

Approximate Yields – These figures vary according to the variety, local environmental conditions, planting designs and cultural practices.

Amount to Raise Per Person – These figures are average ranges; specific amounts will vary depending on projected usage.

Storage – Optimum storage conditions; gives temperature ranges and percent relative humidity.

Preservation – Suggestions for preserving the crop over an extended period; contact your local county Extension office for specific food preservation methods.

Questions and Answers

Common questions received from gardeners and growers and solutions or explanations to the problems.

DR. CRAIG R. ANDERSEN is associate professor and Extension horticulture specialist - vegetables, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Fayetteville.

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