

# The 10 Easiest Vegetables to Grow

## Ease into the Garden with These Plants

New to gardening? Worried that planting your first edibles will turn out to be a fruitless labor? Don't worry! While not totally foolproof, certain plants are ideal for new gardeners who want to increase their chances of gardening success. Here's a list of the top 10 easiest vegetables you can grow, regardless of skill level or age.



### 1. Carrots

Find a plot of soil (or a deep pot) that is free from rocks and deep enough to handle this root vegetable. Rocky soil can result in crooked carrots that, while perfectly edible are not the most aesthetically pleasing. Carrots are ready for harvest when their tops breach the soil line. Try Scarlet Nantes, Danvers Half Long and Sweet Treat varieties.

### 2. Green Beans

There are many different kinds of beans, but "broad beans" are one of the easiest vegetables to cultivate. Bush beans are more productive, but broad beans are easier to manage. Pole beans, while easy to grow, also need a trellis. Beans freeze and can extremely well, too! Try Kentucky Wonder, Royal Burgundy and Contender varieties.

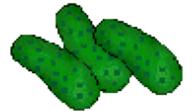


### 3. Lettuce & Spinach

A salad fresh from your yard is unbeatable! Luckily, lettuce--a vast category of plants that includes microgreens (tender lettuce greens that are chopped when barely a few weeks old), head lettuces, leaf lettuces, spinach, and arugula--is an easy plant to grow and maintain. Do successive sowings every two weeks to space out your harvest. Look for Buttercrunch, Salad Bowl or Rocket (arugula) seeds and for Spinach, choose Bloomsdale, Renegade or Baby's Leaf.

### 4. Cucumbers

If you let them, cucumber plants will sprawl, so provide your plants with ample space to stretch their roots. Try smaller varieties to make your own homemade pickles! Be sure to avoid planting cucumbers until all danger of frost has passed. My favorites are Diva, Straight Eight and Salad Bush Hybrid.



### 5. Kale

Kale is remarkably high in Vitamin A and C and is a wonderful addition to salads, omelets, and soups. You can pick it continuously once its leaves are of a reasonable size to encourage new growth. It tastes best just after a light frost and will have trouble growing in the heat of the summer in full sunlight. Check out varieties like Lacinato, Redbor and Rainbow Mix.

### 6. Tomatoes

With a little water and a lot of sun, tomato plants will grow and fruit all summer long! Most people prefer to buy starter plants from nurseries or home improvement stores, which is an easy, time-saving way to start. Tomatoes are fragrant and nutrient-rich, and nothing can beat the taste of a freshly picked homegrown tomato! You'll enjoy Big Boy, Beef Steak and Roma tomatoes.



### 7. Radishes

Radishes are ideal for beginner gardeners. Plant seeds directly into the garden in early spring or fall for a peppery addition to your favorite salads. Choose from Cherie, Cherry Belle and Scarlet Globe.

### 8. Bell Peppers

Like tomatoes, starter bell pepper plants are widely available at nurseries and home improvement stores. They make a crunchy additive to salads, add a pop of color to soups, and act as a nutritious compliment to kabobs. Try California Wonder, Gypsy and Big Bertha.



### 9. Summer Squash

Squash is a high yielding plant, so you will probably only need a few plants to feed an entire family. Squash plants dislike the wind, so be sure that your plot has some protection. Harvest when the squash are about 5-8 inches long. Your family will love Green Bush, Gold Rush and Sure Thing varieties.

### 10. Basil

An essential additive to cooking, this aromatic herb isn't just for lovers of Italian cuisine! You can grow basil in pots or in the ground—even indoors on a sunny windowsill. Sow seeds directly into the garden in early June in a sunny, well-drained area. When the leaves reach a desirable size, just pluck them from the plant and wait as the basil continues to provide fragrant and flavorful leaves that you can also dry and use long after summer is past. Genovese, Sweet and Magical Michael basil are good varieties to try.

