

family
**Vegetable
Garden**
series

EXTENSION BULLETIN E-824 (17)

Onion

family

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SPICE UP YOUR LIFE!

No kitchen should be without **ONIONS** or its relatives! They are easy to grow, and many types and varieties are available.



RECOMMENDED VARIETIES Days from planting to harvest in ()

ONIONS:

Sets
Ebenezer (95-100)
Stuttgarter (95-100)

Seeds
Autumn Spice (96)
Abundance (100)
Spartan Era (100)
Spartan Gem (105)
Downing Yellow Globe (110)
Ruby Red (115)

Transplants
Sweet Spanish (95-100)

Bunching
Beltsville Bunching (65)
White Portugal (100)

LEEKs: American Flag (120)

GARLIC: Creole (120)
Italian (120)

Plant onions and relatives as early as possible in spring (Mar. 20 - Apr. 20). They grow best in cool weather and can stand frost.

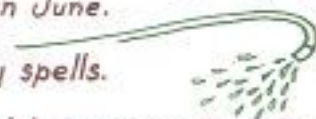
THE BASICS

soil: Onions grow best in a well-drained and well-cultivated sandy loam soil. If your soil has much clay, add organic material like grass clippings, leaves or well-rotted manure.

fertilizer: Mix in 2 pounds (4 cups) of 5-20-20 fertilizer per 100 square feet of soil before planting. Apply a high nitrogen fertilizer in June.

water: Water thoroughly during dry spells.

weeding: Weed carefully or use a mulch to prevent weeds (see No. 4 in this series: Keep 'em Growing).



ONION FAMILY - A Spicy Group

DRY ONIONS

Starting

Onions can be grown from seeds, sets or transplants.

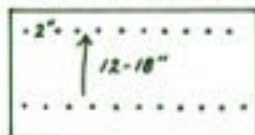
- A set is a small onion grown from seed the previous year.



- They should be no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across. Larger sets go to seed easily causing bulb growth to stop.
- Place sets 1 to 2 inches deep in rows 12 to 18 inches apart.
- Place 2 inches apart in row (closer if you use the thinnings for green onions).
- Cover with 1 inch of soil.

- Transplants (small onion plants) cost about the same as sets. They produce the largest onions.

- You can buy plants or start your own.
- Space plants the same as for sets.



- Seed is the cheapest way to start onions, but produces irregular bulbs and is only good for early-maturing varieties.

- Sow seeds $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep in rows 12 to 18 inches apart.
- Thin to 2 to 3 inches between plants.

Harvesting

- Dig onions when tops dry and fall over.
- Dry well before storing. Spread them on the floor of a garage, porch, shed, etc.
- Store in a dry place near 32°F.
- Leave 1 inch of stem on onions for storing.

If properly dried and stored, onions will last all winter. White onions do not keep as well as yellow and red varieties.

ONION TYPES

a good, all-purpose cooking onion



YELLOW GLOBE



BERMUDA

use raw, in salads and on hamburgers.



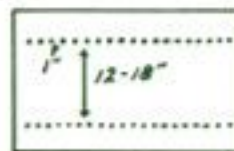
SWEET SPANISH

sweet and mild

GREEN ONIONS

These are the same as dry onions, but are harvested sooner.

- Plant sets the same as for dry onions, but space 1 inch apart. Every few weeks, plant more sets for a fresh supply all summer.



- Transplants may be bought or started yourself.
- Use seeds from any standard onion variety. Plant the same as for dry onions. Or, use a bunching variety which does not form bulbs.

You can also use thinnings from dry onions as green onions. Pull before bulbs start to swell.



ONION RELATIVES

GARLIC

Grow garlic from the cloves which make up the bulb.

- Plant single cloves $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, 3 inches apart, with 12 inches between rows.
- Harvest garlic like dry onions.



Buy cloves through seed catalogs or the supermarket. Use garlic in salads, bread or sauces.

CHIVES

Plant seeds or transplants. Chives are perennials with pretty purple flowers.



- Sprinkle seeds in rows 12 inches apart, or in a pot.
- Leave 12 inches between transplants in a row.

To harvest, cut tops as needed. Add to cottage cheese or dips. Bring chives inside in the fall and grow on a windowsill.

LEEKs

Leeks have a mild, delicate flavor.



- Plant seeds like onions, or plant in September for an early crop the next year.
- You may also buy or grow transplants.
 1. Place these in furrows 4 to 6 inches deep.
 2. As plants grow, fill the furrow gradually or hill up soil around plants to increase white area of roots.

Leeks from seed take about 130 days. Use like green onions; add to soups and stews. Trim tops to 5 inches.

SHALLOTS

Milder than onions, shallots are grown from cloves like garlic or from sets.



- Let them mature and eat like dry onions.
- Or, pull early and use like green onions.

Buy sets through seed catalogs or at garden centers. Harvest and store bulbs like dry onions. Sauté shallots and add to cream sauces, seafood dishes or scrambled eggs.

PRESERVING

Onions and relatives can be frozen, canned or dried, as well as stored (see No. 11 in this series: Drying and Storing Vegetables).

INSECTS AND DISEASE

See Extension Bulletin E-760 (b) or your County Extension Agent for more information.



KEYS
TO
SUCCESS

- Plant early.
- Fertilize and water well; keep weeded.
- Dry bulbs well before storing.

Other bulletins in this series provide additional information on vegetable gardening.

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