

## Harvest Time



- Asparagus: 6 to 8 inches tall, and before the tips begin to open. Cut or break off stems at the soil line.
- Beans (Snap): Pick when the pods are almost full size, but before the seeds begin to bulge. Never pick beans that are wet or have dew on them.
- Beets: Pick the greens when the leaves are 4 to 6 inches long. If you want to use the tops or small beets, pick when the beets are 1 to 1 1/2" in diameter. If you want to use the roots only, pick when the roots are 1 1/2" to 3" in diameter.
- Broccoli: Pick when flower heads are fully developed, but before flower buds start to open. Cut 6 to 7 inches below the flower heads.
- Brussels Sprouts: Pick when sprouts at base of plant have become solid. Remove sprouts (buds) higher on the plant as they become firm, but do not strip the leaves, as they are needed for further growth. They tend to taste better if harvested after the first fall frost.
- Cabbage: Pick when the cabbage head has become solid. Leave older leaves, stems and roots to produce small, lateral heads later in the season.
- Carrots: Pick when roots are 1/2 to 1 inch or more in diameter. If you want to store carrots, pull them just before the ground freezes in the fall.
- Cauliflower: Pick when curds (flower heads) are 6 to 8 inches, but still are compact, white, and smooth. Curds that are exposed to sunlight become cream colored, rough, and coarse in texture. Therefore, cover curds when they are 3 to 4 inches across by tying the outer cauliflower leaves loosely above the curds.
- Celery: Pick when the plants become 12 to 15 inches tall. When the plant is still young and tender, the lower leaves (8 to 10 inches long) may be removed from a few plants and used in salads, soups or cooked dishes.
- Chard: Break off new leaves at the ground level as they appear in early spring. Pick the tender leaves throughout the season.
- Collards: Pick by breaking off outer leaves when they are 8 to 10 inches long. New growth from the center of the plant will provide a continuous harvest throughout the growing season.
- Cowpeas/Black-Eyed Peas: Pick when seeds are near full size, but still bright green. Dry seed can be used for cooking, baking, or in soups. Pick dry seeds when they are full size and dry.

- Cucumbers: Pick burpless cucumbers when they are 10 to 12 inches long. For sweet pickles, pick cucumbers when they are 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches long. For dill pickles, pick when the cucumbers are 3 to 4 inches long. For slicing, pick cucumbers when they are 6 to 9 inches long and are bright green and firm.
- Eggplant: Pick when eggplant is about 4 to 6 inches long, but still firm and bright in color. Older eggplants
- may become dull in color, soft and seedy.
- Endive: Pick when plant is 10 to 12 inches across and after blanching the center leaves of the plant by covering
- or tying loosely to exclude light for 2 to 3 weeks.
- Garlic: Pull the garlic when tops begin to bend over or die.
- Gourds: For eating, pick gourds when they are 8 to 10 inches long, young and tender. For decoration, pick when gourds are mature and fully colored, but before the first fall frost. Also, you'll know a gourd is mature if a finger nail doesn't leave a mark on them.
- Horseradish: Dig up roots in the late fall or early the following spring.
- Kale: Break off outer leaves when they are 8 to 10 inches long. New leaves will grow from the center of each plant for harvest throughout the growing season.
- Kohlrabi: Pick when bulbs (thickened stems) reach 2 to 4 inches
- in diameter; depends on variety.
- Leeks: Pull when leeks are 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter and before
- the ground freezes.
- Lentils: Pick when lentil pods turn yellow. Mature seeds can be used
- in soups.
- Lettuce: If growing leaves, pick when outer, older leaves are 4 to 6 inches long. If growing heads, pick
- when it is moderately firm and before seed stalks start. Leaves taken from either leaf or head
- lettuce can be harvested once the leaves are 4 to 6 inches long. New leaves provide a continuous harvest
- throughout the growing season, until hot weather may bring a bitter flavor and seed stalks begin.
- Mushrooms: If growing edible mushrooms, pick when the mushroom is 1 to 2 inches across, but before the cap separates from the stem.
- Muskmelon: Pick when the base of the fruit stem begins to separate from the fruit. The fruit is almost ripe when the separation begins, but will be fully ripe when a crack appears completely around the base of the fruit stem.
- Mustard: Pick when outer leaves are 8 to 10 inches long. New leaves will provide continuous harvest, until
- flavor becomes too strong and the leaves become tough in texture from hot weather. Seeding again

- in late summer will provide for a crop with a milder flavor and tender texture.
- Okra: Pick when young and tender pods are 3 to 4 inches long, but still bright green.
- Onions: For green onion sets, pick when onions are 6 to 8 inches tall. Harvest any with round, hollow seed stalks when they appear. Continue harvesting onions until all are used. Mature onion sets do not store well. If planted from seeds or plants, harvest when tops fall over and begin to dry. Pull with tops on and dry them in a
- protected place, cutting tops 1 inch above bulb for further drying.
- Parsnips: Pick in very late fall, after early frosts, and in very early spring before growth starts. If roots are to be left in the soil over the winter, cover after early frosts with 3 to 5 inches of soil to avoid injury from alternate freezing and thawing.
- Peas: Pick when pods are fully developed, but still green. Edible pod peas can be picked when pods reach near full size (about 3 inches) and before seeds show appreciable enlargement. If you only want seeds for eating, pick peas when seeds are fully developed, but pods are still fresh and bright green. For Sugar Snap and Sugar Ann peas, pick when the pods are filled out.
- Peppers: Pick when peppers are firm, good size, and appropriate in color. In 2 to 3 weeks "mature" green peppers will be fully ripe (green will change to red).
- Potatoes: Pick when tubers are full size and skin is firm. "New" potatoes can be harvested at any size, but generally after the tubers are 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter. If you plan to store your potatoes, it is best to wait for the top of the plant to die, then dig up the potato.
- Pumpkins: Pick when fruits are full size, the rind is firm and glossy, and the portion of the pumpkin touching the soil is cream or orange in color.
- Radicchio: Pick in fall, after the first frost for the best flavor. The burgundy red leaves with white midribs should be folded to resemble a small, loose, head of cabbage.
- Radishes: Pick when 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter.
- Rhubarb: Pick when stalks are 8 to 15 inches long. Flavor and tenderness are best in spring and early summer. Harvesting from well established plants may be continued throughout the season; may want to pull all leaves present just before the first fall frost.
- Spinach: Pick when larger leaves are 6 to 8 inches long. Pull larger, whole plants from the row until you harvest
- all plants. Spinach that is planted in early spring goes to seed when the days get longer. If spinach is planted in early August, it does not usually go to seed during the shorter days of fall.

- Squash: Pick winter squash when it is full size, the rind is firm and glossy, and the portion of the squash touching the soil is cream to orange in color. Pick summer squash when 6 to 10 inches long.
- Sweet Corn: Pick when kernels are fully rounded, but still filled with milky juice. Harvest about 21 days after silk appears. Pull each stalk once the last ear of corn has been harvested.
- Sweet Potatoes: Pick in late fall, but just before the first early frost. Make sure to dig up carefully to avoid cuts, bruises, and broken roots. Use smaller, younger roots soon after harvest, as sweet potatoes typically do not store well.
- Tomatoes: Pick when fruits are fully colored. For fully ripe tomatoes, leave completely red fruits on healthy plants for 5 to 8 days during the warm, sunny days of August and very early September. Pick only fully ripe tomatoes for juice or canning to ensure full flavor, good color, and maximum sugar content. Tomatoes will ripen indoors if picked at a mature green stage or when some color is showing.
- Turnips: Pick when roots are 2 to 2 1/2 inches in diameter, but before heavy fall frosts.
- Watercress: Pick tips of stems 6 to 8 inches long, especially in spring and fall. This is when leaves and stems are fully developed but still bright green and tender.
- Watermelon: Pick when watermelon is full size, dull in color, and the portion touching the soil turns from greenish white to cream. The tendrils nearest a melon will curl and dry up when a melon is ripe.