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## Cucumbers

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There are many varieties of cucumbers. When selecting which variety to plant be sure to consider how you will use them (eating fresh or pickling) as each variety is suited for different uses based on taste.

### Planting

- Cucumbers should be planted between April 20 and July 15, May 1 to July 1, and May 10 and June 15 in Western, Central, and Eastern Kentucky.
- Plant seeds at a depth of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inches. If starting cucumbers as transplants, start seeds 3 to 4 weeks before the desired planting date.
- Final plant spacing should be 2-3 feet apart for trellised vine cucumbers and 4 feet apart for un-trellised vine cucumbers.
- If planting in a container it should be 8 inches deep.
- Consult the back of the seed packet for more information specific to your cucumber variety.

### Care and Harvest

- Trellising vining cucumber varieties can reduce mold issues.
- Water consistently, especially after flowering starts. About 1 inch per week (including rain) should be enough.
- 5 tablespoons of a high nitrogen fertilizer per 10 ft of row can be applied 1 week after blossoming and again 3 weeks later.
- If using compost, supply 0.17 cubic feet of compost per square foot of bed space.
- Cucumbers have male and female flowers, so they



require pollinators. Poorly pollinated cucumbers tend to be small or curly and can appear if the weather is rainy.

- Cucumbers are ready for harvest 45-65 days after the seeds were planted. Start picking when they reach 1.5 to 2 inches in length. Picking smaller fruit will encourage higher production.

## Storage and Use

- Cucumbers will store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. If individually wrapped in plastic, they may last up to 2 weeks.
- Storing cucumbers with fruit that give off ethylene, such as apples, can cause yellowing.
- Cucumbers are not typically frozen.
- If making pickles, hot or fresh pack the cucumbers leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$  in head space for fermented pickles and  $\frac{1}{4}$  head space for quick process pickles. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes for pints and 15 minutes for quarts.

## References

- Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky. ID-128. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service
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- Swiader, J.M. and G.W. Ware. 2002. Producing Vegetable Crops, 5th Ed. Interstate Publishers, Inc. Danville, Illinois.



## RECIPE: CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

Toss together in a colander:

- 2 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced, peeled if desired
- 2 teaspoons salt

Let stand and drain for 45 minutes. Press the excess water out of the cucumbers and place in a bowl. Add:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sour cream or plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

And toss well. Garnish with:

1 teaspoon chopped dill, basil, or tarragon.

Additional optional ingredients:

- Thinly sliced red onion
- Lemon Juice
- Oregano
- Garlic

Makes 4 Servings

