

♥ 1,890

**Growing
for the
future.**
#kysuag

LEARN MORE

INFORMATION FROM
KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Eggplant

Dr. Leigh Whittinghill, Assistant Professor of Urban Agriculture

Planting

- Eggplants are best started as transplants. Plant seeds at a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch 6 to 8 weeks before desired planting date.
- Plant transplants between May 1 and July 1, May 10 and June 15, and May 15 and June 1 for Western, Central, and Eastern Kentucky.
- Transplants should be spaced 18 inches apart.
- If planting a container, it should contain 4-5 gallons per plant.

Care and Harvest

- Water about 1 inch per week (including rain). Take extra care to uniformly supply water from flowering to harvest.
- An additional 5 tablespoons of a high nitrogen fertilizer per 10 ft of row can be applied after first fruit set.
- Eggplants are ready for harvest 50-60 days after the seeds were planted. Removing mature fruit quickly can encourage more production.
- Harvest before they lose their glossy color. This, and dark seeds are signs of over maturity, which can mean that the eggplant has a spongy texture.
- Cut fruit from the plant so that the branches are not damaged.
- Eggplant bruise easily, so handle them carefully.



Storage and Use

- Eggplants can be stored in the refrigerator, but it can lead to browning and off-flavors
- Store in a cool place outside the refrigerator for up to 1 week.
- Eggplant is ethylene sensitive, so it should not be stored with ethylene producing fruit such as apples, bananas, and peaches.
- To freeze, slice into 1/4- 1/3 in thick pieces and blanch for 4 minutes. Adding 1 cup of lemon juice to each gallon of blanching water can keep the eggplant from browning.

References

- HGTV. 2018. Freezing Eggplant. <https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/gardens/garden-to-table/freezing-eggplant>. (accessed 16 June 2018).
- Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky. ID-128. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service
- Markham, B.L. 2014. The MiniFarming™ Bible: The Complete Guide to Self-Sufficiency on ¼ Acre. SkyHorse Publishing. New York, New York.
- Rombauer, I.S. M.R. Becker, and E. Becker. 2006. Joy of Cooking. Scribner. New York, New York. Pg 75.
- Savethefood.com. 2018. I want to store vegetables. http://www.savethefood.com/food-storage/vegetables?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIlcD4wODV2wIV-C77ACh35tAAVEAAAYAAAEgLVnPD_BwE (accessed 15 June 2018)
- Swiader, J.M. and G.W. Ware. 2002. Producing Vegetable Crops, 5th Ed. Interstate Publishers, Inc. Danville, Illinois.



RECIPE: BABA GHANOUSH (ROASTED EGGPLANT DIP)

With a knife pierce in several places each:

- 3 medium eggplants (about 4 pounds)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place on baking sheet and roast until skins are dark mahogany in color and flesh feel soft, 45-60 min. OR roast the eggplants on a grill or open flame. Let stand until cool enough to handle. Split the eggplants. Scoop the flesh into a colander, and press to extract excess liquid. Transfer to a food processor and add:

- 2 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)
- 1 to 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons salt

Pulse until smooth. Taste and adjust the lemon juice and salt. Transfer to a shallow serving bowl and garnish with:

- Stir in ½ cup yogurt-optional
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
- Pitted olives- optional

Serve with warm pita bread or pita chips.

Makes about 3 cups