

Onions Planting Guide

by Farmers' Almanac Staff Updated: November 20, 2020

Used in countless recipes and one of the best vegetables for long storage, onion are a great way to enjoy the fruits of your labor throughout the entire year.

How To Grow Onions

Start: Onions can be started from seeds or from sets (small bulbs).

Seeds can be direct sown or started indoors 6-8 weeks before the last frost.

Plant 1/4" deep in seed starting mix and set in a sunny window or under grow lights.

After danger of frost, onions should be transplanted 3-4" apart in rows 1-2' apart.

Be sure to harden off onion plants in a sheltered area for one week before planting.

Onion sets should be planted after any danger of frost. Plant by simply pressing onion sets into the soil until they are just covered, 3-4" apart in rows 1-2' apart.

Water: Ample water is important at all stages of growth, but especially critical during bulb development.

A soaking of 1" of rain or water a week is required in well-drained soil.

Soil: Prepare soil by working organic matter 6-8" deep and removing stones.

Onions prefer well-drained soil. pH 6.0-7.0

Light: Full sun.

Fertilize: Onions are heavy feeders. Work a balanced fertilizer into the soil prior to planting, then continue with an all-purpose, balanced fertilizer as recommended, or side-dress with a balanced fertilizer after six weeks.

Harvest: About 100 days after sowing, when 1/4 or so of the leaves have fallen over yellow, bend the tops over. After a few days, pull the bulbs and leave them in the garden, covered by the foliage, for up to a week to dry. Then move onions to a warm, dry place with good air circulation for 2-3 weeks to cure.

Notes: Be sure to plant onions suited to your area of the country. Onions come in long day, short day, and intermediate day varieties.