



Using, Storing and Preserving Eggplant



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Eggplant is a cold-sensitive vegetable that should be started from transplants. Set transplants in the garden when the soil has warmed and the danger of frost has passed.

Recommended varieties

Large, oval fruit

Dusky (60 days to harvest, good size, early production)

Epic (64 days, teardrop-shaped fruits)

Black Bell (68 days, round to oval fruits, productive)

Elongated fruit

Ichiban (70 days)

Slim Jim (70 days; lavender fruits turn purple when peanut-sized)

Little Fingers (68 days; clusters of slim fruit 6 to 8 inches long)

Storage and Food Safety

Eggplant fruits do not like cool temperatures, so they do not store well. Harvest and use immediately for best flavor. If you must store them, wrap in plastic and store for one to two days in the refrigerator. Use while the stem and cap are still greenish and fresh-looking.

To prevent cross-contamination, keep eggplant away from raw meat and meat juices.

Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

For best quality and nutritional value, do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

Lawn or garden questions?

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How to Preserve

Canning is not recommended for eggplant.

Freezing

Harvest before seeds become mature and when color is uniformly dark. Wash, peel and slice into ½-inch-thick pieces. Water blanch,* covered, for 4 minutes in 1 gallon of boiling water containing ½ cup lemon juice (fresh or bottled). Cool, drain and package, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

***Water blanching:** Use 1 gallon of water per pound of prepared eggplant. Put eggplant in blanching basket or strainer and lower into boiling water. Place lid on pan/blancher. Return water to boiling and start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil. It should take only a minute to come back to a boil. If it takes longer than one minute, too much eggplant has been put in the boiling water.

References

Wolford, R., and D. Banks. 2013. "Eggplant." Watch Your Garden Grow. University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Available at urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/eggplant.cfm

Andress, Elizabeth, and Judy A. Harrison. 2006. So Easy to Preserve (fifth edition). Bulletin 989. University of Georgia Extension.

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