



Growing Onions

Onions are biennial, which means that they normally form bulbs the first year, then flower and go to seed the second year. **Onion sets** are immature (approx. 1/2") bulbs that were planted in fall and dug in spring for sale. **Onion transplants/starts** look like green onions or scallions and are usually sold in bundles.

Planting:

You can plant onion starts in fall or early spring. In September, the air is cooler and the ground is still warm which gives the plants time to establish roots before winter dormancy. The result is larger, sweeter onions and an earlier harvest time. You can also plant onion starts or sets in early spring for a late fall harvest.

- Onions are a long-season crop, so give them a dedicated sunny spot in your garden. The need root space so remove weeds and rocks first.
- Onions are susceptible to disease, so be sure to rotate the planting location in your garden from year to year.
- Amend well-draining soil with compost and mix in some organic fertilizer.
- Plant bulbs so that the little peak at the top is just above the soil line. This is where the green part of the onion will emerge. Space about 4"-6" apart for full size onions or 1" apart for green onions/scallions.
- If using transplants/starts, insert them individually with the junction of the roots covered with about 1" of soil. Most of the white stems should be in the soil.

Fertilizing & Watering:

- Onions are fairly drought tolerant vegetables, so water only when they start to look pretty dry, otherwise, let our northwest rains do the rest.
- Fertilize again with a timed release, balanced granular fertilizer, halfway through the growing season.

Harvesting:

- Your onions are mature when the foliage topples over and starts to turn yellow usually by late summer/early fall. You can harvest immature onions or the top greens anytime to use like scallions.
- Remove the dirt around the bulbs and place them in a warm, dry, well-ventilated spot. Drying for storage can take anywhere from 7-14 days.
- When the tops necks are completely dry, the roots wiry and brittle, and the outer skin on the onion becomes slightly crisp, they are ready to be stored.
- Store dried onions in a wire basket, crate or mesh bag in a cool, dry place.

Onions Friends - Cabbage Family, Strawberries, Tomatoes, Chamomile, Carrots, Beets, Dill, Lettuce

Onions Foes - Beans, Peas, Asparagus