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Home Garden Vegetables For Freezing Or Canning

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Asparagus — Most home grown plants are from seed of either the Mary Washington or Mary Washington 500 varieties. Purchase 1-year-old roots or transplants from a garden store or grow them from seed in your garden. Place the roots in trenches about 6 to 8 inches deep and space them 18 to 24 inches apart in the row. Rows should be 3 to 4 feet or more apart. Asparagus plantings will last for many years. Wait 2 years before harvesting, then harvest spears up to ½ inch in diameter. Be sure to let the plants grow in the fall to produce fern that will strengthen the roots for next year's harvest. So-called wild asparagus are escapes of garden varieties and are usable. Tender spears can be harvested by snapping — rather than cutting — above the tougher portions of the stalk.

Snap Beans — Snap or garden beans will snap or break when fresh and picked timely. The name "string beans" is no longer used because the new varieties have little fiber in them. Most bush varieties do well in Idaho and mature much earlier than the pole bean

varieties. Plant beans after frost danger has passed, usually after about May 15 in southwest Idaho and May 25 in central Idaho. Earlier plantings offer no real advantage. In southern Idaho, you can usually plant bush beans up to July 1 for a late crop. Plant the seed 1½ to 2 inches deep. Bush bean varieties mature in 50 to 60 days; use the shorter maturing varieties at higher elevations. Pole varieties requiring less than 65 days to maturity will also do well. Beans do best when they receive light frequent waterings. Pick the bean pods when they are young and before the seeds start to enlarge and harden. If you freeze them, pick the beans a little sooner than you would for fresh use or for canning. Follow proper canning procedures for safe use. Snap beans also make delicious pickles.

Lima Beans — Most Lima beans take a full season to grow, so use varieties that mature in 65 days or less. Grow only small-seeded varieties such as Clarks Bush, Jackson Wonder, NemaGreen, Henderson's Bush or Early Thorogreen. Plant around May 15 or

Most gardeners want to grow vegetables that can be processed either by freezing or canning. Many vegetable varieties were developed specifically for freezing or canning while others were developed for fresh market use. Seed catalogues usually describe the best use for each vegetable, so you can select vegetable varieties for the purpose you want. All freezing and canning varieties are also excellent for fresh use.

Remember that all vegetables reach the "peak of perfection" early in the development of the usable portion of the plant. Learn when this occurs and harvest at the peak of perfection for highest quality. All vegetables are best when prepared immediately after harvest. Early morning harvest is better for quality than late afternoon harvest. Many plants may be wilted from hot sun by late afternoon. You can hold quality for a short time if you will ice or refrigerate the vegetables as soon as possible after harvesting.

Vegetable varieties often home grown and processed include:

when danger of frost has passed. Place the seed 1½ to 2 inches deep. Pick the shell before the seeds get hard. For best quality, harvest before any pods turn "buckskin" color.

Broccoli — Many new hybrid lines of broccoli are now available. The old lines like DeCicco or Waltham take more room to grow — 3 feet between plants in the row — and can be harvested up to 5 times during a season. The new hybrids usually are small and can be planted 1 foot apart in the row. Many were developed as a "one-pick" crop. The king head will be large and they will produce a few second heads. You can use transplants but you can also direct-seed in April and May. Plant the seed ½ inch deep. The plants are hardy and will stand some frost. Pick the heads before the flower buds start to open. Broccoli is excellent frozen.

Cauliflower — Early Snowball, Snowball X and Y and Snowchip are a few of the varieties available for growing. Use transplants or plant seed in April and May. Plant the seed ½ inch

deep and thin plants 12 to 18 inches apart in the row. When the curd starts to form, tie the top leaves together so the curd remains white and blanched. Harvest before the head gets too large. Cauliflower freezes well if the curd is not too mature. Cauliflower also makes excellent pickles.

Brussels Sprouts — Brussels sprouts require a long growing season. They mature after frost in the fall. Long Island Improved is an old variety, best grown from transplants. Jade Cross Hybrid is a shorter season hybrid variety that can be direct-seeded in April. Space plants 12 to 18 inches apart in the row and raise just like broccoli or cauliflower. For best results, remove the growing tip about mid-August so the brussels sprouts will get larger. Harvest around the first of October. You can freeze brussels sprouts.

Beets — Detroit Dark Red, Early Wonder and Green Top Bunching are good, old varieties of garden beets. Many new releases are available for you to try. Most garden books say you can plant beets early, but they seem to do best when planted about mid- to late April. Place the seed $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch deep and thin to about 2 to 3 inches apart in the row. The greens are delicious fresh or frozen and should be picked when the bulbs or beets are about 1 inch in size. The larger beet roots seem to be best when canned or pickled.

Swiss Chard — Lucullus and Fordhook Giant are old varieties but some new lines are also available. Plant seeds about mid- to late April, the same as for garden beets, and thin the plants to 6 to 8 inches in the row. Harvest the leaves individually so the plants will produce all season. The leaves freeze better if the mid-rib is cut out. The mid-rib can be diced and creamed for a delightful dish.

Sweet Corn — Each gardener has his own favorites of the many hybrid sweet corn lines available. Plant sweet corn from mid-April on, depending on where you live. An 80- to 85- day corn can be planted up to the first of July in

southwest Idaho and still produce before frost, especially if we have a warm July and August. Plant about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. Space plants 6 to 10 inches apart in the row. Plant over a period of time so you will have sweet corn through the growing season.

Sweet corn can be frozen or canned. The kernels should be above 60 percent moisture for best use. Many people prefer about 65 to 68 percent moisture for best flavor. Ice or chill the corn to retain quality while you prepare to process it. If you want to try something different, dry corn for back packing or camping. To dry, cut off the kernels, spread them on cheese cloth and dry in the sun or in a drier.

Peas — Many varieties of peas are available. The sweet varieties, which are preferred by most, all appear wrinkled or shriveled when dry. The fresh peas as we would use them, however, are smooth. The less sweet varieties are more starchy and the dry seed is smooth. Plant early — as soon as March 1 in warmer areas. Plant $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep and thin to 6 plants per foot of row. Peas do better in cooler weather and usually quit producing in hot weather. Pick peas early in the morning and process as soon as possible for best quality. Ice the pods if you have more than you can handle in a short period of time.

Edible pod peas (Dwarf Gray Sugar and Melting Sugar) can also be frozen. Raise them the same way and process before the pods develop fiber.

Spinach — Open-pollinated varieties of spinach are best planted in late February or early March in warmer areas. Viroflay, Long Standing Bloomsdale and Hollandia are good varieties for early-season planting. Harvest and process before hot weather or the plants will start to bolt. If you see any of the plants starting to bolt, harvest the entire planting right away. Some hybrid lines do well planted in the fall.

Tomato — Many fine tomato varieties are available to the home

gardener. Most gardeners buy or raise transplants but many varieties can be grown from seed. Plant seed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep in the house or cold frame 6 weeks before you plan to set them out in your garden. Young seedlings will tolerate frost better than the transplants. Several excellent tomato varieties have been developed for Idaho by University of Idaho scientists. Tomatoes do not freeze well. Follow proper procedures for canning.

Greens for Freezing — If you want greens for freezing, grow kale, collards, mustard greens or turnip greens. Most can be planted around early to mid-April, and all are excellent fall crops. Plant collards (Vates, Georgia) around July 25 in southwestern Idaho, earlier in cooler areas. Plant kale (Dwarf Siberian), mustard (Southern Giant Curled, Tendergreen, Florida Broadleaf or Green Wave) or turnips (Shogoin, Purple Top White Globe) about August 1 to 15. Irrigate frequently and lightly for best growth. Pick the leaves before they get tough. All are excellent either fresh or frozen.

Remember — *For vegetables to be good — fresh, frozen or canned — they should be harvested at the "peak of perfection". Most can be used raw, so sample them in the garden to determine the best time to harvest.*

The University of Idaho has published a number of other Current Information Series (CIS) publications to help the home gardener select vegetable varieties and do a better job of gardening. These publications are available from your county Extension Agricultural agent. Among them are:

- CIS 218 — Vegetable Varieties for Idaho Gardens
- CIS 219 — Vegetable Varieties for Home Gardens in Idaho's Cooler Areas
- CIS 226 — Garden Vegetable Insect Control
- CIS 230 — Tomatoes for Southeastern Idaho
- CIS 265 — Fertilizer Tips for Gardeners
- CIS 267 — Early Tomatoes

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