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virginia home food production



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CULTURE NOTES GUIDE
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

Reprinted January 1981

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

MH 400

The following plant sheets have been developed to provide a quick guide - a summary of a wide range of information concerning the culture, nutritional value, harvest, and storage of specific food crops. Comments are brief and to the point. Most are self-explanatory, but some need further clarification.

The following key will help to explain the usage of various terms on each food crop fact sheet.

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: sunny (direct light at least 6 hours per day, prefers 8-10 hours per day).
tolerates partial shade (will do well at less than 8 hours light per day but probably needs at least 5 hours per day).
prefers shade (more than 6 hours of direct sunlight may be harmful, prefers filtered light, probably needs at least 3-4 hours of light per day).

SOIL: well-drained (water does not stand or remain puddled after a hard rain for more than 24 hours).
deep (at least 8-12" of topsoil or loose subsoil, no shallow hardpan).
loam (soil composed roughly of equal portions of clay and sand, with a reasonable amount of humus. Good garden soils).

FERTILITY: Results of soil tests can be used to indicate the basic fertility levels of soils. Soil testing does not indicate nitrogen levels due to variability.

	lbs./Acre P_2O_5	lbs./Acre K_2O
low	0-25 lbs.	0-90 lbs.
medium	26-85 lbs.	91-212 lbs.
rich	86+ lbs.	213+ lbs.

TEMPERATURE: Approximate ranges of daily mean temperatures preferred for optimum growth.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. W. R. Van Dresser, Dean, Extension Division, Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061; M. C. Harding, Sr., Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia 23803.

MOISTURE: These amounts vary according to the nature of particular soils.

average (roughly 1" of water per week including rainfall).

moist (roughly 1-2" of water per week. Be certain soil is well-drained.)

CULTURE

HARDINESS: very hardy perennial (can withstand winter extremes in most all parts of Virginia with only slight protection).

hardy perennial (can withstand winters with protection in colder areas).

hardy annual (can withstand frosts in spring and fall, may need protection from heavy frosts and freezing).

half-hardy annual (may withstand light frosts, but not heavy frosts or freezing).

tender annual (frost will seriously damage plant tissues)

very tender annual (frost will destroy plant tissues. Needs warm weather for growth).

FERTILIZER NEEDS: low, medium, heavy feeder (refers to relative levels of nutrient uptake from the soil. This information can be used to group similar types of plants, so that fertilizers may be applied to sections of your garden according to plant needs).

COMMON PROBLEMS

Identify cause of crop problems. Review non-chemical and preventative controls information. Refer to Pest Management Guides for specific chemical control recommendations.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

The U. S. RDA is the standard adopted by the Food and Drug Administration for nutrition labeling. The U. S. RDA's are based on the 1968 edition of the Recommended Dietary Allowances as set forth by the National Research Council. Generally speaking, the U. S. RDA for any nutrient is the highest amount recommended for any sex-age group. For example the amount of vitamin A recommended by the National Research Council ranges from 2500 IU for a 4 year old child to 5000 IU for an adult male. The U. S. RDA for vitamin A is 5000 IU.

The percentage of the U. S. RDA supplied by foods can be helpful in comparing the nutritive value but should not be the only reason for choosing a food. Eating a variety of foods which furnish small amounts of a nutrient will get you to the same goal.

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

APPROXIMATE YIELDS: (These figures vary according to varieties, local environmental conditions, planting designs, and cultural practices).

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON: (These figures are average ranges. Specific amounts will vary depending on projected usage, whether fresh or processed, and according to personal preferences).

STORAGE: % RH = percent Relative Humidity

PRESERVATION: (See Extension Tabloid on Food Preservation for specific methods).

