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no. 406
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virginia home food production



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CUCUMBERS DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

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BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

MH 406

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: sunny

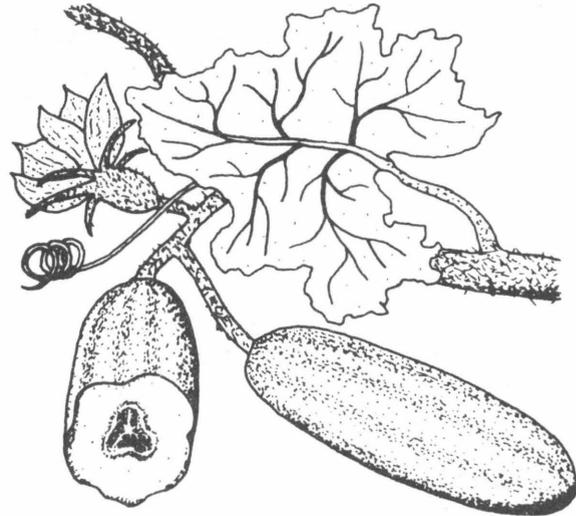
SOIL: well-drained, moderate-high
organic matter

FERTILITY: rich

pH: 5.5-7.0

TEMPERATURE: hot (65-80°F)

MOISTURE: keep moist, not water
logged.



CULTURE

PLANTING: seed after danger of
frost has passed and soil
has warmed, or use plants
sown indoors in "peat
pots" three to four weeks
previous to this time.

SPACING: 12-18" x 48-72" in rows,
24-36" x 48-72" in hills
(2-3 plants per hill)

HARDINESS: very tender annual

FERTILIZER NEEDS:

Heavy feeder, side-dress one week
after blossoming begins, and again
three weeks later (1½ oz. (33-0-0)
per 10 feet of row).

CULTURAL PRACTICES:

Varieties include both the slicer or
fresh salad type and the pickle type
(which can also be used fresh), and
dwarf-vined or bush varieties.

Most varieties of cucumber vines
spread from row to row. Training
on a trellis or fence along the edge
of the garden will correct this and
also lift the fruit off the soil.
If trellised, plant four to five
seeds per foot in rows spaced 30
inches apart. Untrellised rows may
need to be spaced four to six feet
apart. When plants are four to five
inches high, thin so they are nine
to twelve inches apart. It may be
better to plant a second crop July
1, which will have fewer disease

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problems, than to continue harvesting an early planting until frost.

In order for the flower to develop into a fruit, pollen must be carried by bees from male flowers - on the same plant or different plants - to the female flower, the one with the swollen "pickle." Poor pickle set is common during rainy weather when bees are inactive. Use insecticides after sundown to avoid harming the bee population.

Plants respond to mulching with soil warming plastic in the spring or organic materials in the summer.

Working in the vines when leaves are wet may cause disease problems. Wait until after the morning dew evaporates.

COMMON PROBLEMS

DISEASES: Bacterial wilt (spread by cucumber beetles), anthracnose, leaf spot, mosaic, scab, powdery and downy mildews.

INSECTS: cucumber beetles, flea beetles, aphids, pickleworm.

CULTURAL: mis-shapen cucumbers (low fertility or poor pollination), failure to set fruit (lack of bees for adequate pollination, or lack of male pollinators for gynoecious "female flowering" hybrids).

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

	<u>Grams</u>	<u>Calories</u>
Cucumbers, pared sliced. . . 1 cup	140	20

<u>% U.S. RDA</u>	
<u>Vitamin A</u>	<u>Vitamin C</u>
-	25

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

DAYS TO MATURITY: 50-70

HARVEST:

From when cucumbers are about two inches long up to any size before they begin to turn yellow, about 15 days. Remove by turning cucumber parallel to the vine and giving a quick snap. This prevents vine damage and results in a clean break.

APPROXIMATE YIELDS: (per 10 foot row)
8-10 lbs.

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON: 10-15 lbs.

STORAGE: medium cool (45-50°F) and moist (95% RH) conditions.

PRESERVATION: can as pickles