

# Eggplant

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Eggplant originated in India and is a member of the nightshade family, which includes potato and tomato. At one time the Spanish called it the “apple of love” and considered it an aphrodisiac. Other Europeans called it the “mad apple” and thought it caused insanity. While neither has been proven, eggplant is known to be very nutritious. It is a great source of fiber and has a fair amount of iron, potassium, and protein.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- ‘Black Beauty,’ ‘Florida Market,’ ‘Ichiban’

### Soil Preparation

- Remove all weeds and till the soil to a depth of 6 to 10 inches.
- Incorporate a 3- to 4-inch layer of compost.
- Apply ½ tablespoon of 15-5-10 fertilizer for every 10 feet of row.

### Planting

- Buy healthy transplants.
- Plant after all risk of frost has passed and daytime temperatures are at least 65° F.
- Space plants 24 to 36 inches apart.

### Fertilizing

- After transplanting, pour 1/4 cup of starter solution around each plant. Make a starter solution by dissolving 2 tablespoons of a water-soluble fertilizer in 1 gallon of water.
- After the first fruits appear, apply ½ tablespoon of 21-0-0 fertilizer for every 10 feet of row.

### Watering

- Soak the plants with at least 1 inch of water per week.

### Care During the Season

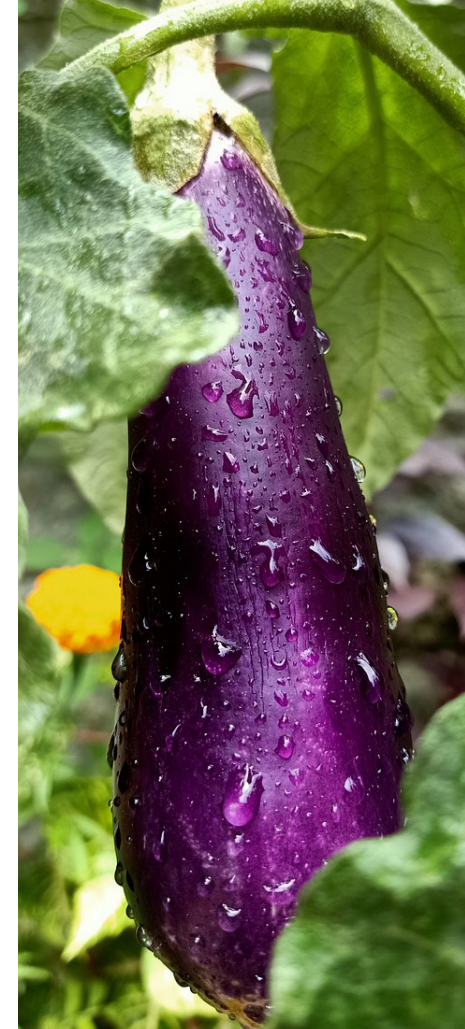
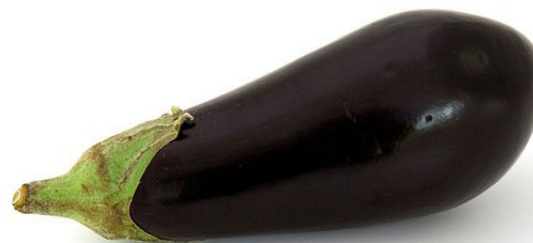
- Remove weeds from around plants.
- Mulching will help reduce weed growth and conserve soil moisture.

### Insects & Diseases

- Common insect pests include cutworms, eggplant flea beetles, serpentine leafminers, and spider mites.
- Potentially damaging diseases are anthracnose, late blight, alternaria leaf spot, and verticillium wilt.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

### Harvesting

- If you lightly press the fruit with the side of your thumbnail and the indentation remains, the fruit is ripe and ready to be picked.
- Harvest by cutting the fruit off of the plant.



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-  
drained



Planting:  
Warm



Harvest:  
Summer-Fall



Life Cycle:  
Annual



Container  
Friendly



## Buy it

- Avoid eggplants with cracks or discoloration. Good eggplants will seem heavy for their size.

## Store it

- Eggplants can be stored in the refrigerator's crisper drawer for up to 7 days.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

## Use it

### Eggplant Delight

Course: Main Dish   Servings: 4

#### Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized eggplant, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- 8 oz whole wheat penne pasta, cooked
- 8 oz mushrooms, sliced
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 medium-sized zucchini squash, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced

#### Instructions

Clean your preparation area and wash your hands.

Preheat oven to 400° F.

Spread 1 tablespoon of olive oil across the bottom of a lined baking sheet and arrange sliced eggplant.

Bake eggplant for 20 min. or until tender and lightly browned.

Place a large skillet over medium heat and add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the sliced

mushrooms, diced shallot, sliced zucchini, and minced garlic and cook for 5 min.

Add water and lemon juice and cook for 4 min. Add diced tomatoes, parsley flakes, oregano, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 min.

Add roasted eggplant and cook until all veggies are tender (about 5 min.).

Remove from heat and serve over cooked, whole wheat penne pasta.



### Grilled Eggplant

Course: Side Dish   Serves: 6

#### Ingredients

- 2 medium-sized eggplants
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp dried or fresh oregano

#### Instructions

Heat grill.

Cut eggplant vertically into 1/4-inch slices.

Brush both sides with olive oil.

Grill 3 to 4 min. on each side or until grill marks are present.

Transfer to serving plate and sprinkle with dried or fresh oregano.

## Learn about it

- Eggplants are free of fat, sodium, and cholesterol.
- They are low in calories and are a good source of dietary fiber.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

