



how does your garden grow? In the gardening kingdom, these five vegetables are among the easiest to grow across the country, especially in containers. For your child, that means a satisfying amount of harvesting; for the family, it means fresh summer produce right out the back door. A few things to keep in mind: Get organic soil if you can. Exact planting times vary, depending on where you live—they can be as early as April or as late as June (discuss it with someone at your local garden center before you buy your seedlings). And sometimes, despite plenty of TLC, plants die. Don't beat yourself up; try again with a new plant or start fresh next year.

	Tomatoes	Green Beans	Summer Squash	Cucumbers	Lettuces
Variety	“Early Girl” “Sun Gold” “Super Sweet 100”	“Blue Lake”	“Sunburst” “Straightneck”	“Lemon” “Burpless”	Mixture of heat-tolerant red and green loose-leaf varieties
Pot	18” deep. If 20” wide or wider, plant 3 tomatoes together. Get wire tomato cages or wood stakes and ties for each plant.	16” deep. Wide enough for a bamboo tepee and 1 plant.	16” deep, 15” wide. 1 plant.	16” deep. Wide enough for a wood trellis to train the vines. 1 plant.	Shallow pot 12” wide. Space seedlings 4” to 5” apart.
When to Plant	Late April, May, June, or when nighttime temperatures remain above 55 degrees.	Late April, May, June (times vary regionally; check with your garden center).	May, June, early July (times vary regionally; check with your garden center).	June, July, early August (times vary regionally; check with your garden center).	After the last frost. Plant several pots 2 weeks apart for a steady supply.
Watering	Keep soil damp until vigorous growth begins, then water sparingly.	Keep soil damp. Avoid watering leaves.	Keep soil damp. Avoid watering leaves.	Keep soil amply and consistently watered.	Keep soil damp.
When to Pick	First fruits in 50 to 70 days.	First beans in 40 to 50 days. Pick frequently to keep vines producing.	First squash in 30 to 40 days. Best flavor if picked small.	First cukes in 30 to 35 days. Pick small, before skin toughens.	When leaves are 5” tall, shear 3” off the top for salads, leaving 2” above the soil level. The lettuces will produce another crop in 2 to 3 weeks.