



EDIBLE
GARDENING
SERIES

Onions

Garden onions vary in shape, size, color and flavor. Onions add zing to salads, soups, stews and side dishes. Planting usually occurs in late March or early April. They need to grow big tops before the lengthening day triggers bulb formation. If the tops are still small when bulbs begin to form the bulbs will be small. By planting onions as early in the spring as possible, you give them plenty of time to grow food producing leaves that will feed the bulbs so they can grow big. It is recommend to plant at least 40 plants per person. Yellow onions keep best followed by red and white ones.

Onions fit three categories: short day, intermediate and long day. In the Pacific Northwest long day and intermediate onions are planted.

Onions are started in 4 different ways:

- Sets
- Transplants
- Direct Seeding
- Seedlings

PLANTING

Cultivate the soil to a depth of at least 8 inches and incorporate 2 to 4 inches of **Harvest Supreme** and **Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer** into the soil. Water them in with **Bonide Root n Grow**.

• Sets

These are onions that were planted from seed last year. They come in white, yellow and sometimes red. After purchasing your onion sets divide them into two sizes before planting. Larger sets (larger than a dime in diameter) are best used for green onions. The small sets (smaller than a dime in diameter) produce the best bulbs for large dry onions. Round onion sets produce flat onions: elongated or torpedo shaped sets mature into round onions. Plant onion sets, pointy end up 1½ to 2 inches below soil. Space them 3 to 4 inches apart.. Onion sets are used to produce both green onion and dry onions. One pound of sets covers about a 50-foot row.

• Transplants (Walla Walla)

Transplants are purchased in bundles and produce large, attractive onions for slicing. Plant 4 inches apart and 1 ½ inches deep. When mature they will appear to sit on top of the soil.

• Direct Seeding

Seeding directly in soil. Cover soil with 1½ inches of soil and water in with **Bonide Root n Grow**. Harvest when the white portion is pencil thick. Pull green onions anytime after the tops are 6 inches tall.

• Seedlings

Seedlings are onions started from seeds and arrive at the nursery in tray packs. When seedlings grow 4 inches in height, they can then be carefully lifted from the flat and transplanted to their permanent place. Since an onion seedling does not have much of an enlargement at the base of the stem it is important to make sure most of the white stem end is planted along with the roots. Depth depends on length of roots. Space your seedlings 2 to 3 inches apart.

Please turn the page for more information. ➡

www.TsugawaNursery.com
410 E Scott Ave, Woodland, WA 98674 (360) 225-8750

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FERTILIZING

Apply **Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer** at the time of planting and then again when leaves are 6 inches tall, and again when bulbs are starting to swell. Since onions are a bulb, they benefit from additional phosphorus. Best form would be **Dr. Earth Fish Bone Meal**.

WATERING

Water regularly to maintain adequate soil moisture. Irrigation is especially critical when the bulbs start to swell.

MULCHING

Apply 2 or 3 inches of **Harvest Supreme Compost** along side your onions, this will help conserve water and help with weed control

DAYS TO MATURITY

Varies with cultivar and method. 100 to 160 days from seed to harvest. Green onions: harvest in 45 days from transplants or sets. Bulb onions: harvest 90 days from transplants or sets.

HARVESTING

Onions are edible at any stage. Immature bulb forming onions can be thinned from the garden and eaten. Onions are ripe when $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of their tops have fallen over and bulbs have developed a papery skin. When harvesting onions for storage wait until at least 50% or more of the tops have fallen over.

Pull mature onions in the morning and allow the bulbs to air dry in the garden for 10 to 14 days, until tops and necks are completely dry. Store in a netted bag, braid or tie tops together and hang

STORING

Store in a cool dark space. The ideal temperature is 32 degrees, not freezing.

CHECK LIST

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Onion Sets | <input type="checkbox"/> Harvest Supreme Compost |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onion Transplants | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Earth Vegetable Fertilizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onion Seedlings | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Earth Fish Bone Meal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Onion Seeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Bonide Root n Grow |