



HOW TO GROW MELONGENE

Melongene (also known as “Eggplant” and Baigan”) can be grown throughout the year. When planting melongene consider the following:

- Melongene is a deep-rooting crop. Roots reach a depth of 35-50 cm. So plough deep!
- The plant bears fruits for a long time (6-9 months). Sometimes even cutting back can result in a new flush of growth and prolong the life of the crop. A fertile soil, rich in organic matter is necessary.
- Melongene needs a lot of water, but it is very sensitive to water logging. Provide adequate drainage. The plant also responds favourably to irrigation under drought conditions.
- This plant must be grown in full sunlight. It does not do well in shaded areas.

(A) PLANTING

- At planting time, add 2 handfuls of well rotted manure to each planting hole. Ensure adequate drainage especially in clay soils.

Transplant Seedlings

- When seedlings are 3-4 weeks old.
- Late in the afternoon.

Some tall varieties may require staking. Stake should be positioned when planting seedling.

(B) SPACING

If several melongene plants are grown together space seedlings 90 cm apart within rows and 1.5 metres between rows. However, melongene can be intercropped with most other vegetables.

(C) WATERING

- In the absence of rain, water daily.
- Ensure that excess water drains off the planting area.

(D) FERTILISING

At Transplanting, apply

- 1 Tablespoon High Phosphorus Fertilizer e.g. 12:24:12 dissolved in 1 litre of water.
- This volume will fertilize 10 plants.
- Apply to roots or leaves (foliar).
- Repeat every 14 days for 4 weeks.

During the Growing Stage, apply

- 4 Tablespoons High Nitrogen e.g. 20:10:10.
- Granular or dissolved in water (water-salt).
- Every 2 weeks until flowering.

At Flowering, apply

- High Potassium fertilizer e.g. 12:12:17+2 plus Trace Elements.
- 100 g (7 tbsp) per plant.
- Granular or dissolved in water (water-salt).

Every 2 weeks for the lifetime of the crop.

- Calcium, either granular or foliar, apply one handful per plant, every two weeks for the lifetime of the plant.

(E) PESTS AND DISEASES

Pests and Diseases left unchecked can hinder a plant's ability to produce food for us.

A combination of control methods is best and is known as Integrated Pest Management.

See Factsheet on Integrated Pest Management titled "IPM for Home Gardeners".

<u>PEST/DISEASE</u>	<u>SYMPTOM</u>	<u>CONTROL</u>
MITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deformation of plant parts • Underside of leaf looks dirty-grey • Fruit develops a corky crust from tip to calyx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead Irrigation • Pruning plants to remove shade • Chemical control
WHITE-FLIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • u n s i g h t l y spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead Irrigation • Chemical control
THRIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corky scarring on fruits • Insects on the underside of leaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overhead irrigation • Chemical control
APHIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scarring on leaves and fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural enemies
ANTHRAC-NOSE (Figure 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sunken spots with a black centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical control



Figure 2



Figure 3

(G) VARIETIES

Some varieties currently available includes:

- Black Diamond
- Long purple
- La Pastora
- Aranguéz
- Farmers Early
- Victoria
- Florida Market

Note: Aranguéz is resistant to Anthracnose and tolerant to Bacterial Wilt.

Melongene is the easiest of all of the solanaceous (tomatoes, pepper, melongene) crops to grow.

(F) OTHER PESTS

Other pests include the melongene fruit worm, shot hole beetle (Figure 3), borers, caterpillars, lace wing bugs and sucking insects.

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