



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries



**GROW**  
Trinidad

# HOME GARDENING TIPS

#PlantSomething



**The rains will be here soon and planting will begin. Your seeds should be in labeled packets. You may need to separate them. Be careful not to lose any, especially the melongene as these are very small.**

**Here are some tips to help you obtain a good harvest.**

## **Did you KNOW?**

Some varieties of Pigeon peas (e.g. Tobago Pigeon Peas) are sensitive to light and will only flower from late October to February (short days)!

CES STARZ was developed for export by the Vegetable Seed Unit, Research Division!

## **Store seeds**

- Do not leave seeds in hot areas
- Store seeds in a cool area such as in the vegetable section of your refrigerator until ready to sow.

## **Prepare to plant**

Before you start, please prepare. Here is your Garden List:

- Cutlass, hoe, file
- Hand spade (optional)
- Well-rotted manure or compost
- Sharp sand (optional)
- Fertilisers
- Old containers e.g. buckets (plant ochro, melongene, bodi )
- Barrel with cover or tank to store water
- Spray bottle
- Watering can
- Garden hose
- Any other item you may need.



## Germinate Seeds

All the seeds (except melongene) can be sown directly into the soil. Direct sowing is not recommended if:

- It is hot and dry and you cannot water daily
- There are lizards, birds, mole crickets or cutworms which may destroy seeds.

Germinate seeds by any of these methods:

- Place seeds on a piece of tissue and keep moist.
- Mix of equal amounts of soil, manure and sand. Place in seedling trays, egg trays or cups then plant seeds.
- Use commercial growing medium and plant seed.

## Care for Seedlings

Most seedlings will germinate within 3 to 10 days. Keep seedling trays out of direct sunlight and water daily. Over the following weeks, gradually expose seedlings to sunlight.



## Plant

Transplant seedlings 3 or 4 weeks after germination. Plant in area with full sunlight.

- Prepare beds, mounds or containers. Make holes in the soil. Place manure in holes and plant seedlings.
- If planting seeds in the ground, make holes in the ground, add manure to holes and sow 2 to 3 seeds. Cover seeds up to 3 cm (1 inch) deep with soil.
- Water daily to encourage germination.

## Manage Crops

- Observe your plants daily.
- Look for signs of pests, disease or nutrient deficiency.
  - Holes in leaves may be caused by insect pests. Remove pests by hand. Use solutions of soap water to manage pests such as mealy bug or spray plants with solutions of neem or garlic to keep off some pests.
  - Buying chemicals to control pests? Look for green band labels or those with natural active ingredients (these are safer to use).

- Yellow or pale leaves may mean you need to apply a fertiliser.
- Remove weeds.
- Keep record of activities (planting date, fertiliser use).
- Protect beneficial insects such as lady bird beetles. They manage pest population.

## Apply fertilizer

Ochro, pigeon pea and bodi may grow and produce well without fertilizer. The other crops will need additional nutrients. Use commercial fertilizers if needed.

### Observe your crops!

#### General fertilizer and other recommendations:

*Use agricultural lime in soil at planting to improve soil pH (reduce acidity) over time.*

1. Apply 1 tablespoon of granular fertilizers per plant in a circle around the plant and away from the roots.
  - One week after planting - Use fertilizer high in phosphorus (P) e.g. 12:24:12.
  - Growing stage to fruiting stage (every two weeks) - use fertilizer high in potassium (K) e.g. 12:12:17+2

**OR**







2. Mix the following fertilizers in a 5 gallon bucket of water and wet soil around plants with solution every other week.

Fertilizer mix for 5 gallon bucket of water

- 12:12:17+2 : 3 ½ level teaspoons
- Calcium Nitrate: 2 level teaspoons
- Magnesium Sulphate: 1 level teaspoon

## Harvest and store

- Harvest pigeon peas, ochro and bodi regularly.
- Avoid knocking off flowers.
- Store pumpkins in cool dry place.
- Store ochro, corn, pigeon peas in plastic bags in freezer.

CROPS (Variety)	SOWING TO GERMINATION	SPACING	TIME TO HARVEST	COMMON PESTS	COMMON DISEASES
<b>Bodi</b> (Los Baños Bush Sitao) 	6 to 10 days	0.5 m (1 ½ ft.) within row, 1 m (3 ft.) between row	5 to 10 weeks Pinch pod off the plant. Do not pull. Harvest 3 times per week.	Aphids Mites Shot hole beetles	Cowpea severe mosaic disease
<b>Corn</b> ( CIMMYT 7728) 	5 to 7 days (within 1 week)	25 cm (10 in.) within row, 75 cm (2 ½ ft.) between row	10 to 12 weeks Harvest when silk turns to dark brown.	Corn earworm Corn leaf worm Army worm	Downy mildew Rust
<b>Melongen</b> Long purple) 	10 to 15 days	90 cm (3 ft.) within row, 1.5 m (5 ft.) between rows	3 months Harvest at stage you wish to cook	Mites Whiteflies Thrips Aphids	Anthracnose
<b>Ochro</b> (White ochro) 	4 to 6 days (within 1 week)	90 cm (3 ft.) within row, 120 cm (4 ft.) between row	60 days Harvest every other day. Cut off from plant.	White flies Aphids Mites	Hibiscus mealybug
<b>Pumpkin</b> (CES Starz) 	4 to 6 days (within 1 week)	Mounds 1 m (3 ft.) diameter x 30 cm (1 ft.) high, 3 m (9 ft.) apart	3 ½ months Harvest when vines start drying. Fruit should have hollow sound.	Thrips Cucumber worm	Gummy stem blight Cercospora leaf spot
<b>Pigeon Peas</b> (Tobago pigeon peas) 	10 to 15 days	0.5 m to 1 m rows (1 ½ to 3 ft. apart)	4 to 5 months. Snap off pods from stem.	Moth larvae	Fusarium