



GTCG WEEKLY

Recipes, Garden Pests and TidBits

Newsletter

Issue #10

Cucumbers

[Scientific name: Cucumis Sativus]

GROWTH

Cucumbers are part of the melon, or gourd, family and are a widely cultivated plant. Plant cucumber seeds in late May when the soil is warm and frost risk has passed. Sow seed 4 to 6 inches apart, ½ -inch deep, in rows 5 to 6 feet apart. Cucumbers grow quickly without a lot of care. Keep soil consistently moist with 1 inch of water per week.

PRESERVATION

Pickling cucumbers are best if processed within 24 hours of harvesting. Cucumbers can also be stored in a humid area that is around 55 F. They last about one week in the refrigerator. See www.ag.ndsu.edu/food - then click on food preservation.



HISTORY

Cucumbers originated in India. Cucumbers originally had both male and female flowers, and in order to stop the male flowers from pollinating and making a less-bitter taste, growers had to remove the male flowers. Now, though, most modern cucumber varieties only grow female flowers.



DISEASES/PESTS

Cucumber beetles are common pests of cucumbers. There are two types of cucumber beetles: striped and spotted. The striped cucumber beetle can survive North Dakota winters and typically begin to appear in late May to early June. If you decide to use pesticides, apply according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Recipe of the Week

Refrigerator Pickles



INGREDIENTS

- 5 ½ cups cucumbers, sliced
- ¼ -½ white onion, sliced
- 3 ½ cups water
- 1 ½ cups white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 5 garlic cloves
- 3 tablespoons dried dill seeds



DIRECTIONS

1. In a tall jar, pack garlic, onions and cucumbers as tightly as possible.
2. In a saucepan, heat the vinegar, water and salt. Pour the hot vinegar mixture on top of the cucumbers and let sit for one hour.
3. Refrigerate for 48 to 72 hours before eating for maximum flavor. These pickles will store for about two weeks in the refrigerator.
4. The spiced vinegar brine can be reheated and reused one time. Add 1 to 2 teaspoons of additional salt and ¼ to ½ cup vinegar to the reheated mixture each time. As the brine draws the water from the cucumbers, the salt and vinegar get diluted.

CONSUMPTION

Cucumbers can be consumed in a variety of ways:

- On salads
- In smoothies
- In dips and dressings
- On sushi
- Pickled or raw

NUTRITION

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 15 calories, 0 grams (g) fat, 1 g protein, 3 g carbohydrates and 0 milligrams sodium.

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EXTENSION