

# AFRICAN KITCHEN GARDEN GUIDE



## FRUIT VEGETABLES



### AFRICAN EGGPLANT

- Seedlings indoors in late March (March 25, or 12 weeks before the last frost). Germination at 27-30 °C over 3-8 days with more than 16 hours of light/day.
- Plant in early June when they're 18° or higher, 60 cm from one another.
- Bury the collar 4 cm deep to encourage new roots and stronger anchoring to support the weight of the fruit.
- Climate: requires considerable warmth (18-29 °C), does not tolerate cold, sensitive to wind and drought.
- Rich soil, ample supply of young compost, composted cow and sheep manure.

#### Gilo:

Harvested before maturity: shiny green fruit, quite light, firm without being hard.

Harvested at maturity: orange fruit, more bitter, but without seeds.

#### Gboma:

Harvested before maturity: highly nutritious young leaves and green fruit. Bitter taste.



### HOT PEPPERS

- Seedlings indoors in mid-March (12-14 weeks before the last frost). Need warm temperatures to sprout and grow: 25-29 °C.
- Plant in the garden when it's >18 °C. If <18 °C, there will be less fruit or deformed fruit.
- Ideally plant before flowering, or else remove the flowers.
- Distance of 50 cm between seedlings, with stakes. Plant up to the seed-leaves and later earth up the stem; roots will develop on the stem to help anchor the plant and support the weight of the fruit.
- Warmth, light and water in abundance.
- Mature or medium mature compost, small quantities of chicken manure, several (3-4) times. Too much nitrogen stimulates leaf growth more than the fruit.
- Harvest when they've reached their color. The more you harvest, the more productive will they be.



### CALABASH (GOURD)

- Seedlings indoors on May 1 (5-6 weeks before the last frost) and planted in early June. Or seedlings in early June directly into rich, loose, warm soil with plenty of space, sheltered from the wind (germination: >18 °C; growth: 23-29 °C).
- Grow under black geotextile fabric or biodegradable plastic. Must not go without water up to fruiting.
- Harvest in the autumn when the stem has dried out. Treat them as carefully as you would fine china, since the slightest injury may damage it or cause it to rot. Do not hold by the stem.
- Dry out completely over the entire winter at room temperature.



### OKRA

- Sowing is around April 20 (4 weeks before the last frost). And planting is done when it's 18 °C or warmer.
- Harvest the fruit when small: 5-8 cm or 2-3 inches long.

## LEAFY VEGETABLES



### AMARANTH (CALLALOO) AND CRINKLING

- These are sown on April 20 (4 weeks before the last frost), to be planted in the garden after that last frost.
- Keep the plant from flowering through regular pruning. Flowering turns the foliage bitter and less tender.

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## ROOT VEGETABLES



### SWEET POTATO

- In February, healthy, firm (ideally organic) sweet potatoes are planted in pots in a warm, bright place, and six weeks later they'll produce shoots to take cuttings from.
- The shoots are pruned to 5-10 cm and are potted individually in potting soil (for example, 3-4 per 3.5" pot).
- Water and cover with a dome or a bag or a plastic bottle. The important thing is that the cover be translucent and keep moisture in. Then place it on a heater carpet or in a warm, sunny place. In 1 to 2 weeks they'll have taken root, and the dome can be removed.
- Plant in the garden once the risk of frost is over. Harvest when the foliage turns yellow in the fall.

## LEGUMES



### PEANUT

- Can be started indoors on April 1 (9-10 weeks before the last frost); make sure it gets warmth and light.
- The seeds are removed from the pod and then planted in individual pots (3-4 / 3.5" pot; ideally in peat moss), so that the roots are not disturbed during planting.
- Do not fertilize.
- Seedlings are pulled up when the foliage has dried out, around the beginning of autumn. That's one of the symptoms of their maturity. Growing ranges from 90 to 150 days starting from planting in the garden. To make sure the plant is really mature, collect a few pods from the plant and open them. The insides of the pod must have turned brown.
- They're left to dry for 1 to 2 weeks in a warm place before the stems are pruned and the peanuts are detached.



### COWPEA, BLACK-EYED PEA

- These are seeded directly outside in early July, or when the sun is very warm (>10 °C before seeding, since they fear the cold).
- Not too deep: 5 cm - "beans should be able to see the gardener leave."
- Do not fertilize, or they'll produce only leaves. Not only no fertilizer, but no compost as well.
- Legumes have the ability to fix nitrogen from the air thanks to the rhizobium bacteria on their roots. To inoculate, place the bacteria in the hole with the seedlings.
- Be careful when hoeing: the roots are shallow.
- Earth up seedlings to help them stand upright.

## CEREALS



### SORGHUM

- It is sown on April 20 (4 weeks before the last frost), to be planted or sown in place in the spring (16-18 °C).
- Harvest in the fall when the birds start to invade.



### AFRICAN MILLET, PEARL MILLET AND TEFF

- These are sown directly in the garden in early June (16-18 °C).
- For harvest, same as for sorghum.

Seeds can be purchased on the Internet from various suppliers; for example: Baker Creek Heirloom, Bountiful Gardens, Johnny's Selected Seeds, Prairie Garden Seeds, Richters, Stokes, West Coast Seeds, W. H. Perron, William Dam Seeds.