

Corn

Zea mays



Seed Starting/Propagation:

- Corn must be started from seed, outdoors two weeks before the last frost date up to June.
- Plant them 4 per square foot or 12" apart, 1-4" deep, if summers are dry it is best to plant deeper. Corn will actually grow better if planted in the square foot method since the wind is the main pollinator.
- For a continuous harvest you can plant a new crop every two weeks.
- Plant in rich soil with added compost or manure.
- Be mindful of where you plant corn since it will get quite large and you don't want to shade other plants growing behind it.

Care:

- Mulch right after planting to hold in moisture and prevent weeds from starting.
- Water weekly, more if the weather is hot and dry.
- Keep area clear of weeds.

Companion Planting:

- Peas and beans are really good to plant with corn because they add nitrogen to the soil which corn uses quite a bit of.
- Also does well next to potatoes, cucumbers, squash and sunflowers.
- Keep away from tomatoes.

Harvesting:

- Check the ears daily when the silk starts to turn brown and they feel bumpy.
- Peel a small strip of husk to do a milk test, puncture a hole in one kernal with you nail and if it pops with milk, it is ready.
- Hold the stalk with one hand and use the other to pull down and break off the ear.
- For harvesting dent or flint corn, let the ears dry on the stalks and then rub the kernals off.

Preserving:

- Sweet corn can be cut off the cob and either bottled or frozen.
- Once completely dried, Dent and Flint corn should be stored in an airtight container and stored in a cool, dry place.

Pests:

Corn has more problems with pests than any other crop. A local farm plants rows of sunflowers throughout the farm to attract the birds and hopefully leave the corn alone, so I will be trying this method. Rotating crops will help prevent earworms and corn borers.