

# Vegetable Transplanting Tips

## What is a vegetable transplant?

- A transplant, or seedling, is a young annual plant that has been grown from seed in a container, either grown by the gardener or purchased.

## What should be considered when purchasing transplants?

- When purchasing transplants, it is very important to make sure the plant is healthy. Look for plants with strong stems, green leaves, and no signs of pest or disease damage.
- The plant should not be much taller than the length of its pot and should be about as tall as it is wide.
- Do not buy plants that already have flowers or fruit, as this is an indication of stress.

## When should transplants be planted into the garden?

- For spring gardening, plant transplants once danger of frost has passed (around the middle of March), when the transplant has had time to develop a strong root system, and when the transplant is about the length of its pot.
- If growing from seed indoors or in a greenhouse, allow the plant to “harden-off” by placing outdoors in partial shade for a few hours a day, 1 – 2 weeks before transplanting.

## What is the transplanting process?

- Prepare garden site with compost and other soil amendments.
- Water plants very thoroughly just before planting to decrease transplant shock.
- Dig a hole that is at least double the width of the plant’s root ball.
- Add 1 – 2 handfuls of fresh compost or worm castings to the hole.
- Avoid covering any leaves or stems under the soil surface. Remove these lower stems with sharp garden clippers to minimize the size of the wound.
- Avoid touching the stem and avoid disturbing the root ball when removing the transplant from its pot. Gently squeeze the pot to loosen the potting soil and turn the transplant upside down with the palm of your hand to gently catch the transplant.
- Unless the transplant is a tomato, plant so that the soil level is about the soil level of the transplant, making sure the plant has good structure to decrease susceptibility of falling over as it grows.
- If transplanting a tomato, plant deeper than the soil level of the transplant, as tomatoes can grow adventitious roots from their stem, which will improve overall root development.
- Make sure to cover up all roots and water the soil around the plant thoroughly. Continue to water deeply, keeping the soil moist but not soggy, for the next 3 – 4 days while the plant becomes established. You can then begin to switch to a normal watering pattern.
- Always water the soil around the plant, not the plant leaves, throughout the season to decrease susceptibility to disease.



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