

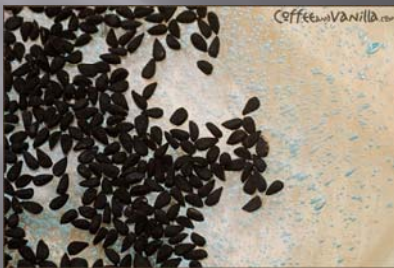
A FEW CROPS FROM SEED TO HARVEST

Popular Vermont crops and the best practices for growing them. Today, we will focus on crops that we are growing for wholesale accounts: City Market, Healthy Living, and Intervale Food Hub.

Onions and Shallots



These are both started from seed in a heated greenhouse during the first week of March



We use trays called "Open 1020's". This means the tray is 10" wide by 20" long and is open, without small, individual cells.



The tray gets filled with potting soil.



And then the seeds are sprinkled in - about 500 seeds per tray is good.



When the onions are about 6 inches tall, they can get a haircut.



They can keep growing in the greenhouse in their trays until the soil is ready to be planted. This is usually in Mid- April.



When it is time to plant, you first separate the onions into individual plants.

Then, lay them out in a straight line. You should plant 2 plants together, every 6 inches or so. There should be about 12" between the rows and you can fit 3 rows in a bed.



It's good to make a trench so that water flows down to the base of the plant.



It is slow work to transplant onions, and they benefit from extra care in the beginning.



Here is another picture of a trench for onion planting.



It is important to take out all the weeds in the onion planting. They cannot compete with weeds for food, water, and sunlight. It is also a good idea to give them a little **fertilizer or compost** after about 2 weeks of being in the ground.

After about 2 months, the onions will start to get big.



They can be harvested when the leaves begin to fall over or turn yellow.



Also, the bulbs underground start to form a skin that is like paper.



Curing Onions - to form papery skins that will allow the onions to store all winter, the onions have to be in a warm, dark, airy place for a few weeks after harvest.





The stems will turn dry and brown. Once that happens, the onions can be wiped clean and the stems can be cut off.

Cured Onions



These onions are a little dirty, and some of the stems are still green. When you sell onions, you will have to make sure that the stems are cured (dried) completely and that the dirt is wiped off.



This onion looks really good.



Cipollini Onions



This is a certain type of onion that is used in Italy, in Europe. It is sweet and flavorful when cooked, but very strong when raw. It stores for a long time in proper storage. We have wholesale accounts that want this onion. It sells for about \$2.00/lb wholesale or \$3.00 /lb retail.

Shallots

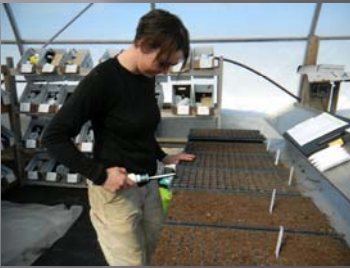


Shallots are another type of onion. They are used in many types of cooking (including Bhutanese / Nepali?). We have contracts to grow these for wholesale markets and the price is \$4.00/lb wholesale. If you sell them retail, you can get up to \$6.00 / lb.

Eggplants



These are started in the greenhouse. We will plant them the week of March 12th.



When the plants are about 2 weeks old, they get planted into a bigger pot.



When the plants are about 18 inches tall, they are ready to plant out. (late May or early June)



Eggplants do well with black plastic and white row cover. This gives them extra heat to grow quickly.



Eggplants are fairly easy to grow, but are very weather dependent. If we have a cold, rainy summer, they won't produce much fruit. They do best in warm weather.



Sometimes, eggplants lose their flowers if it is too hot, though. And this can make them not produce fruit.



They benefit from the bees that pollinate them.



An insect, called Colorado Potato Beetle can damage the leaves. You have to pick these off if you see them, or wiped of the orange eggs. Eggplants and Potatoes are in the same plant family, so the insects like both.



Damage from Colorado Potato Beetle



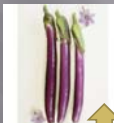
Eggs of Colorado Potato Beetle



There are many types of eggplant. This year, we will be growing 4 different kinds.



DANCER



MACCHIAU



BEATRICE



NADIA

When it is time to harvest, they are just wiped clean. They should not get washed in water.



It's good to use scissors or clippers to cut the fruit from the plant.

Eggplant is sold by weight and packed in boxes that weigh 20 lbs to 40 lbs



It is ripe when the skin is shiny and gives a little when you press it with your thumb.

PRICE:
\$2/LB wholesale
\$3/LB retail

Beans



We will be growing 5
types of beans this
year for market.

Green Beans



Yellow Beans



Horticultural (Butter) Beans

These can be eaten fresh or dried, as pods or as shelled beans.



Haricots Verts (French Green Beans)



These are very thin and delicate. They are worth more money than other beans because of how long it takes to harvest them.

Purple Beans



Beans are planted directly into the soil, when the soil is warm. Mid May is the earliest they can be planted without danger of frost.



The seeder machine makes this job much easier. We will teach you how to use it if you have never used it.



Beans need to be spaced apart about 6 inches between plants. Sometimes that means having to thin (pick out) some of the plants when they are young so that the planting is not too thick.



It's best to plant 2 long rows of beans, about 2 feet apart from each other. These rows are too close together, and it will be hard to harvest them.



Beans need space for air circulation so that disease does not harm them. Air flow keeps the plants dry and molds and diseases are less likely to set in on dry plants.



They get **very heavy and thick with leaves and beans.**

When harvesting, make sure you know what is the correct size. Please ask if you are not sure. We cannot sell beans that are too big!



Good



Too BIG

Beans are sold by weight when sold wholesale. The price is \$2.75 / wholesale. Retail, or at a farmstand, they can be sold in pint containers. A pint can be sold for \$3.00.



Beans need to be washed if they are dirty. If it rains, they get muddy. Sometimes, if it has been dry, they are clean and do not need to be washed.



Beans at a farm stand