

Growing Baby Vegetables



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It is easy to grow your own gourmet “baby” vegetables. There are three main ways to achieve this: harvesting vegetables before they are mature, growing them close together so they don’t have room to grow large, and planting varieties that are bred to produce small vegetables.

Some vegetables may be picked early. These include potatoes, zucchini, beets, fennel, kohlrabi, leeks and onions. Unfortunately, many standard-sized vegetables picked early often lack the flavor they’d have when fully grown.

Some vegetables will produce miniature crops when planted closely together. This works well with broccoli, cauliflower, and leeks. Even varieties bred to be miniature should be planted more closely than standard varieties. Check the seed packet or plant label for details.

Miniature vegetables in the market usually come from varieties bred to produce small

vegetables. The list below will give you some ideas for getting started. Remember to check the seed packet or plant label for proper spacing and harvest dates, as some mini varieties also require crowded conditions and early harvest. Some mini veggies come from full-sized plants, so if your baby vegetables are going to be in a small space, check the spacing requirements for the mature size of the plant.



| Vegetable | Variety | Notes |
|---|--|--|
| Bean 60 days pick early and often | Astrelle Marbel Coco Nain Blanc Precoce Emerite Annelino (green or yellow) | Very productive, 3-4 inches at harvest 5 inch pods have purple splotches Bush type, pencil thickness Pole type, 1/8 inch wide at harvest Curly pods, pick before seeds swell |
| Beet 45-60 days | Action Baby Spinel Little Ball | Dark red, nice greens, 2 inch diameter Globe shaped, 1 inch at harvest Tender, sweet, gourmet quality, 1 inch |
| Carrot 50-60 days | Parmex Thumbelina Lady Finger / Little Finger Primo | Round, sweet, 1½ inches at harvest Round, 1½ inches, 1992 AAS winner Slender, 3-5 inches long Excellent flavor and color, 5-7 inches |
| Cauliflower | Snow Crown (55 days) | Early and vigorous |

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|---|---|--|
| Corn 72-90 days | Early Sunglow Japanese White Hulless Luther Hill Laser Mix (Popcorn) Minor Sweet Baby | Fast growing, sweet, 3-4 inch ears Multiple 3-4 inch ears, compact plant 3-6 inch ears on 4 foot plants 4½ inch bicolored ears 4-5 ears per full-sized plant |
| Cucumber 60-70 days | Miniature White Mexican Sour Gherkin | Small white, thin-skinned fruits 1-2 inch fruit, sweet & sour flavor |
| Eggplant Harvest when calyx opens and fruit softens | Bambino Little Fingers Ichiban Baby Bell | Good producer, 1 inch round fruit Harvest when 3 inches long Productive, 3 inches long 2 inch glossy black fruits |
| Leek 75-120 days | Albinstar Broad London / Amer. Flag King Richard Titan | Pencil thick, long white stem Vigorous, finger thick, blue green leaves Fast grower, mild, finger thick Good flavor, finger thick |
| Lettuce 45-55 days | Tom Thumb Pom Pom Samantha | Oakleaf type, 4-6 inch heads Dark red leaves, bright green heart, 4-6" |
| Melon | N Hampshire Golden Midget | 3-5 lb fruit matures in 75 days |
| Onion | Borettana Cipollini (100 days) Crystal Wax (60 days) | Very sweet, rosy, button-shaped, 2 inch White pearl onion, ½-1 inch wide |
| Pak Choi | Mei Qing Choi (45 days) Ex Dwarf Choi Sum (24 days) Toy Choi (35 days) | Pale stems, dark leaves, 4-6 inch head Harvest when 3-4 inches tall |
| Pea 60-65 days | Waverex Petit Provençal Tom Thumb | Prolific 7-8 peas per pod 8-12 inch plants, heirloom variety |
| Pepper 50-90 days | Sweet Pickle Miniature Yellow / Red Bell Miniature Chocolate Bell | 2 inch peppers on 1 foot plants 2 inch, 2 or 3 lobed fruits Turns chocolate brown when ripe, 2 in |
| Potato Late Fingerlings – do not harvest early | Swedish Peanut German Finger Russian Banana Rose Finn Apple | Peanut sized, yellow flesh Rose skin, yellow flesh Faster maturing Similar to German Finger |
| Pumpkin 85-95 days | Jack Be Little Baby Boo | 2-3 inch orange fruit 2-3 inch white fruit |
| Radish 18-21 days | 18 Day D'Avignon | Fast grower, prefers cool weather Red shoulders, white tip |
| Spinach | Melody (42 days) | Semi-savoy type, 3 inch leaves |
| Squash Pick when blossoms are still attached | Sunburst Condor Butterstick Ronde de Nice | Patty pan type – half-dollar sized Zucchini – green, 4 inches long Zucchini – yellow, 3-4 inches Summer squash, round, 1 inch |