

Eggplant

Solanum melongena · Nightshade family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Tender perennial, grown as annual, seedling
MATURITY 70–90 days



SUN
Full sun, warm



WATER
Regular, deep



SOIL PH
6.0–6.8



SPACING
45–60cm



DEPTH
as per seedling

01 Stake heavy fruit

Eggplant fruit can be surprisingly heavy for the branch it grows on — stake plants at planting time to stop stems snapping once fruit sizes up.



staked and loosely tied as it grows

02 Planting

METHOD	Plant seedlings once soil and nights are reliably warm.
SOIL	Rich, well-drained, high organic matter.
TIMING	Plant in late spring, needs sustained warmth to thrive.

04 Problems

- **Fruit fly** — net or bag developing fruit.
- **Flea beetle** — small holes in leaves, mostly on young plants; net if severe.
- **Blossom end rot** — irregular watering.
- **Spider mite** — fine webbing in hot, dry weather; hose foliage.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Beans Basil Marigold	Fennel	Avoid following other nightshades for 2–3 years.

03 Growing care

- Stake at planting.
- Water deeply and consistently — stress causes bitter fruit.
- Feed with a potassium-rich fertiliser once fruiting.
- Pinch out the growing tip early to encourage a bushier, more productive plant.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Skin is glossy and full colour; dull skin means past its best.
METHOD	Cut with secateurs, leaving the calyx attached.
CURING	None needed.
STORAGE	Fridge, about a week.