



Garden Center and Nursery

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# Sweet Corn

- Sweet corn requires full sun for at least eight hours every day.
- From seedling to harvest is approximately 65-90 days, depending on variety.
- Suggested varieties include: Early Sunglow, Silver Queen and Golden Bantam.

## Planting

Start sweet corn from seed as it does not transplant well. Plant seeds in spring after the last frost date. Plant seeds about 1 inch deep, and space 4-6 inches apart. Water well after planting and again two to four days later if it hasn't rained. Because corn is wind-pollinated, plant in blocks rather than rows. Pollen from male tassels needs to make contact with the female silks. Corn is easily cross-pollinated, so keep different varieties separated by at least 25 feet.

Corn requires rich soil amended with compost. Nitrogen is especially important, since corn is basically a grass. Soil should be loose and have a neutral pH (6.0-7.0.)

Water regularly and deeply, especially if you notice the leaves curling and when the cobs begin to swell. Apply a balanced fertilizer once the plants are about 8 inches tall and again when they start producing tassels. Keep the area free of weeds that will compete for food and water.

## Harvest

Corn is ready when the tassels are dry and brown. Look for fat, dark green ears with brown tassels. Squeeze to test for firmness and a look for a rounded tip. Puncture a kernel with a fingernail – if the liquid is milky, it's ready. Pull ears down and twist to break them from the plant.

## Common Problems

Insects are not usually a problem until the ears begin to form. Look for large holes in the leaves of corn plants. Control corn ear worms by using a product with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*.) A dab of mineral oil on the tips of corn ears also prevents ear worms from entering through the silk.

Corn smut is also common - a black/grey colored fungus. Remove infected ears before it spreads to other plants.