

TRUCK CROPS FOR THE COASTAL PLAIN OF GEORGIA

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Crop Adaptation

The truck crops of greatest commercial importance in the southern half of Georgia are sweetpotatoes, watermelons, okra, sweet corn, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, cantaloupes, snap beans, Irish potatoes, lettuce, lima beans, and onions. Other truck crops commercially grown but of less importance are turnips, pole beans, squash, peas (Southern or Cow), collards, asparagus, pepper, mustard, English peas, and broccoli.

Soils

Fertile soil is essential in the successful production of truck crops. It is a determining factor both in the production of high yields and of superior quality.

Irrigation

Because of the relatively low waterholding capacity of Coastal Plain soils and also of the prevailing short drought periods of spring and summer and the prolonged droughts during late September, October, and November, irrigation is another factor of extreme importance in the production of high yields and of high quality produce.

Animal Manure

In the production of truck crops the use of either compost or animal manure is of decided value provided it is not a carrier of harmful diseases. Examples of crops under which it should not be used are sweetpotatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, and cucumbers. When used to supplement commercial fertilizer it is highly effective when applied at the rate of 10 to 15 tons per acre.

Commercial Fertilizer

Truck crops vary rather widely in their plant nutrient requirements, leafy vegetables responding best to high nitrogen while root crops and fruiting plants use relatively larger amounts of potash. Some of the most generally used and most desirable formulas are 4-8-8, 5-10-10, and 8-8-8. Under most vegetables these should be applied at the rate of 1000 to 2000 pounds per acre. Large amounts of fertilizer applied immediately before planting frequently injure germination. It, therefore, is considered advisable to split heavy applications, using only 600 to 800 pounds before planting and the remaining part as side dressings at the first and/or second cultivations. Fertilizer applied in the drill previous to planting, should be thoroughly mixed with the soil.

Time to Plant

Planting dates suggested in the accompanying tables are applicable for the area lying in the latitude of Tifton. Plantings north of Tifton should be delayed according to location allowing 8 to 10 days in the extreme northern coastal plain whereas planting in area south of Tifton should be proportionately advanced allowing about 10 to 15 days in the extreme southern portion.

Successive Plantings

Because of the long growing season in the Coastal Plain of Georgia, it is possible to grow two or more crops of several of the vegetables such as pole beans, lima beans, southern peas, cabbage, sweet corn, cucumbers, okra, sweetpotatoes, squash, and turnips. To successfully grow successive crops of these vegetables it is necessary either to use irrigation or to time plantings so that growth and maturity will coincide with the most favorable growing conditions. Approximate planting dates for general vegetable crops are suggested in Table Number I.

Varieties

Commercial varieties of vegetables change rather frequently because of the large number of new varieties that are now being introduced. It should be remembered, however, that in many instances such varieties are not locally adapted and should not be planted until their adaptability to local conditions is known. Leading varieties of commercial truck crops are shown in accompanying tables.

