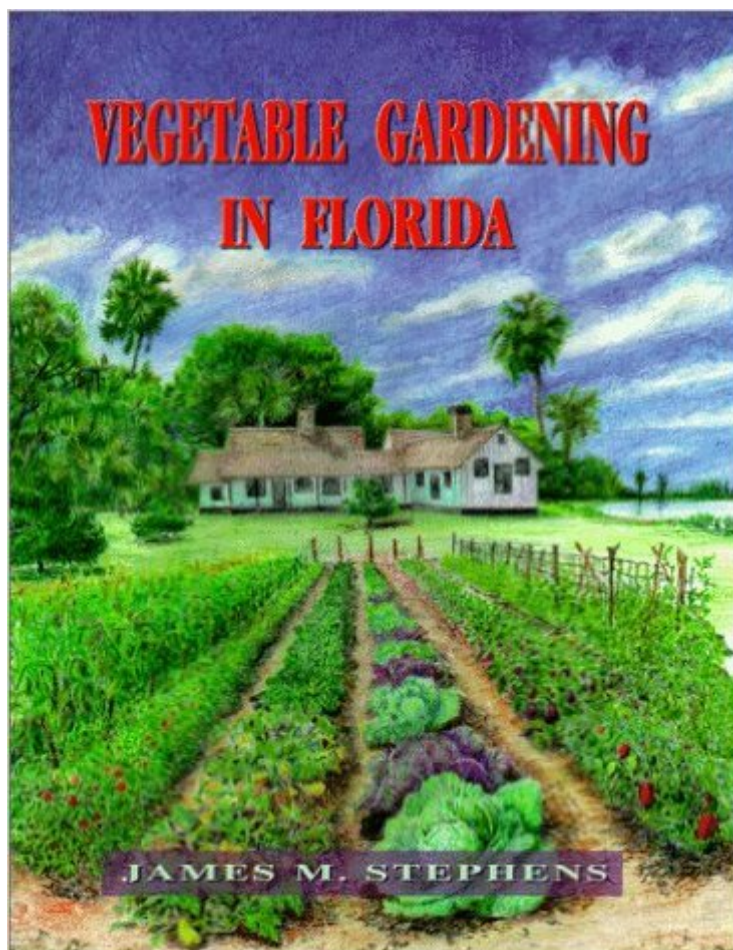


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# Vegetable Gardening In Florida



## Synopsis

"Jim Stephens knows his vegetables. Follow his advice and you will have a successful, fruitful, pest-free garden—whether it is in a pot on your deck or a quarter-acre out back."—Marina Blomberg, garden editor, Gainesville Sun

With full-color photographs and detailed expert advice, this affordable paperback describes how to grow abundant vegetables and edible herbs in gardens anywhere in Florida. Whether you're planting spring peas and sweet corn or crisp cucumbers and the dill you need to can them, Jim Stephens offers clear explanations of useful gardening terms and practices and joins popular growing concepts with the expertise of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. Combining his personal background with decades of experience as Florida Cooperative Extension Service vegetable specialist, Stephens explains types of gardens (including hydroponic and organic), site selection, vegetable variety selection, garden establishment and care, soil fertilization and management, climatic implications, cultivation practices, and harvesting and storing. He also addresses the challenge of pests and diseases and includes a detailed and illustrated description of all the major and minor crops usually grown in Florida. And he doesn't overlook the basic, practical advice: thin the turnips, Stephens says; keep your tools sharp and clean; don't use lawn fertilizer on those vegetables. His guide will be indispensable to county agents, school teachers, garden writers, and anyone who enjoys a juicy, homegrown tomato.

James M. Stephens is professor of horticultural sciences at the University of Florida and State Extension vegetable specialist in charge of educational programs for home gardeners. He was a founder of Florida's Master Gardener program, the Florida Urban Gardening program, and the Organic Gardening Research and Education Center at the University of Florida. He is the author of more than 300 publications and articles and more than 200 radio and television talks on gardening.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Being new to gardening it has been a chore finding books I can understand about gardening. Many make promises but don't deliver information in a sensible manner and I end up more frustrated than satisfied. This one delivers. The thing I love about this book is its simple easily understandable format. The book is loaded with color photographs that help me distinguish the different kinds of problems plants suffer from, making it a simple process in learning how to care for my plants and exactly what may be the problem. I like the way he laid out the charts in the back of the book. One section for cold crops and one section for winter crops. He even has a section for herbs! It takes the work out of thumbing through page after page, book after book, of when, what and where I can grow things. Thanks, Mr. Stephens, for taking the mystery out of vegetable gardening and making my life a little easier and a lot simpler.

This beautifully illustrated book steers clear from all the "professional jargon" and actually allows you to get outside and garden! In a nicely uncluttered way, it shows you through the use of simple illustrated tables WHEN to plant each type of vegetable and WHERE. It makes gardening fun again. Hooray! No longer does one have to spend days reading about soils, biological make-up, beneficial bugs and the other things that make vegetable gardening seem like some mysterious technological feat.

As a new gardener, I was happy to read this easy to follow guide. It answers the basic questions, and gives great timelines to follow. It has full color pictures, that really help you to visualize what they are talking about in the text. It is not a fancy garden book, with all the scientific "mumbo jumbo". Just easy directions to follow for success. So far my garden looks great and I have had no problems thanks to this book.

I was not impressed with this book, especially as a beginner gardener. It is pretty poorly written. I found myself having to look up many terms as they aren't defined in the book. Little context or explanation is given to seemingly major aspects of gardening. For instance, when talking about fertilizing in containers, the author says, "the nutrient solution must be added and drained in the

container once or twice a day." What nutrient solution? For what plants? What ratios? It never says. I hoped the book would give special attention to vegetables grown in Florida such as peppers. The only special attention peppers get are 4 paragraphs in the back of the book that talk about how many peppers will feed a family; that they should be transplanted "with care"; and that they are still edible after turning red (ya thanks!) Note that earlier in the book on pg 43, there is a chart about how easily veggies transplant. Peppers are in the "easily survive transplanting" category as opposed to "require care." Since the back of the book says to transplant the peppers "with care," I see this as a basic contradiction in the book. I'm not really sure this book will help anyone, novice or expert. It's not detailed enough to help an expert and it's not clear enough to help a beginner. With the author's poor grammar and lack of context, you spend more time scratching your head about what he means than you do learning anything. I usually prefer to buy a good book to learn how to do any new thing but so far with gardening I find the internet to be a better source of information.

Katrina Vitkus, illustrator, made this book work. Page vi says the photos came from sources including Marshall Breeze, the UF/IFAS Entomology Department, the National Garden Bureau, Marcia K Oehler, Dole, The Herb Garden, and (of course) Katrina Vitkus. This book has ten pages of the most useful photos of garden pests I've ever seen. That section is followed by four pages of information on recognizing diseases, and then a photo of what "root knot" looks like. The information on each disease is brief, and limited to how to recognize each disease or fungus, but is very clear--especially in conjunction with the photos. The photo of nine kinds of tomatoes strongly reminded me of the lovely photos in the Baker Creek heirloom seed catalog, which I didn't order early enough this year. Apart from the pest and disease photos, this is best seen as an idea book. There are some good charts here, but if you want hard, complete information about growing a specific plant under specific conditions, you should look at Tom MacCubbin's books.

This is the go-to book for Florida gardening! If you are new to FL and want to raise vegies, this is the book you need. Even if you have gardening expertise, you will need some more info for Florida gardening as it is quite different!

Last year I purchased a winter home in Florida I am excited at the idea of growing fresh vegetables in January. However, the soil surrounding my new home seems to be 90% sand. As a midwesterner I am used to rich loamy dirt so I know I have a lot to learn about gardening in Florida. VEGATABLE GARDENING IN FLORIDA has information about composting, rain barrels, container gardening and

much more that will be helpful to me. It contains lists of plants that will do well in my area and gives the approximate planting dates as well as yeild. I am looking forward to planting tomatoes, onions and lettuce in January.

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