

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing fennel

Fennel is a bulbous vegetable with overlapping layers similar to cabbage and long fronds resembling dill. The fronds can be used in salads, but the vegetable is often grown for its bulb, which produces a crunchy texture with a taste similar to licorice. The bulb can be grilled until tender, or sliced thin for use in slaws and salads.

To plant:

As fennel doesn't transplant well, plant seeds directly in the garden after the last spring frost. Sow them ¼ inch deep and 12 inches apart in rows set 3 feet apart. Plant fennel plenty far away from other garden plants to discourage cross pollination. To aid in this, plant fennel in pots or in the back of the garden.

To grow:

Fennel does best in full sun with rich soil, which produces lush fronds. Until the shoots appear, water only by spraying with a spray bottle. After shoots appear, water frequently so the bulb doesn't dry out. Fennel may need to be staked once it reaches 18 inches tall, as some plants can grow up to 4 feet. The bulb grows at the base of the fronds but not underground. Once the bulb begins to develop, blanch the bulb by hilling soil around it to protect it from the sun.

To harvest:

Fennel is ready to harvest after approximately 90 days. Fennel leaves can be harvested as soon as the plant is well established. Only take a few leaves at a time to not cause harm to the plant. The bulb is ready for harvest once it reaches the size of a tennis ball. To harvest the bulb, cut the fronds from the base of the bulb.



[Florence Fennel seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

What fennel craves:

Prior to planting the fennel, add a general-purpose fertilizer to the area by following the instructions on the container or mix compost in with the soil. Fertilization while growing fennel is not recommended, as it will lose its aromatic taste if well fed.

Where to buy fennel seeds:

Check out our website to buy fennel seeds at [ufseeds.com!](http://ufseeds.com)



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