Eggplant

Solanum melongena



Eggplant fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9b

Description:

An exceptional garden plant producing subtle lavender flowers with pale yellow centers followed by interesting deep purple fruit; great for gardens or containers

Edible Qualities

Eggplant is a perennial vegetable plant that is commonly grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. It produces deep purple round eggplants (which are technically 'berries') which are usually ready for picking in mid summer. The eggplants have a bitter taste and a firm texture.

The eggplants are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking

Planting & Growing

Eggplant will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 4 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant can be integrated into a landscape or flower garden by creative gardeners, but is usually grown in a designated vegetable garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America.

Eggplant is a good choice for the vegetable garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.