Dear Gardeners,

We are happy to bring you our third edition of a revised compact visual guide to planting and growing a food garden at home. This booklet has been in response to the numerous queries we have received from amateur and experienced gardeners over the years. We have consulted with Malnad master gardeners to gather the information and traditional knowledge for this compilation. You can find here information on

- when and how to plant your organic, open pollinated seeds and tubers
- transplanting details
- harvesting
- FAQs
- planting calendar

This booklet covers 38 vegetable, tuber and flower species complete with botanical illustrations. The section on tubers encourages food gardeners to experiment with and grow these resilient but forgotten food crops.

Grow a garden, cultivate a future!

The Vanastree Collective
Sirsi, Karnataka India

Send us your feedback to vanastree@gmail.com
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FAQs

What is hybridization?
Hybridization is the cross pollination of plants, resulting in new varieties.

Natural Hybridization is one of the origins of diversification within species. This stabilizes over several generations giving rise to stable, open pollinated varieties.

Modern Hybridization is the purposeful crossing of plant varieties with desirable qualities evidently in order to “improve” them. It is done by selection of certain traits over several generations. It has become a ploy used by seed companies to ensure proprietary and breeding rights over the varieties developed by them, thus monopolising the market. The process renders future generations of those seeds almost sterile or unusable, since undesirable variations show up. Modern hybrid seeds cannot be saved and re-sown. Farmers and gardeners have to buy fresh seeds from the seed companies year after year, thereby incurring high costs.
What are open-pollinated seeds?
Open-pollinated seeds are traditionally bred seeds, which have been developed by farmers in an open, natural environment. They have been preserved for millennia, and can be saved, sown and reproduced by anyone, thus allowing farmers and gardeners independence from seed companies.

What are organic seeds?
Organic seeds are seeds grown in healthy, living soils built up entirely with natural inputs like compost and mulch. They are produced with absolutely no use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and are not genetically modified.

What are climbers and shrubs?
Climbers are plants that are vines and need support. Shrubs are plants that grow erect and do not need support.

What does it mean when a plant is ‘self seeding’?
Self seeding is when a plant disperses its seeds such that offspring come up in the vicinity of the mother plant. So the seeds need not necessarily be replanted by the gardener. Cosmos is an example of a self seeding plant.
What is transplanting?
Transplantation is a process where a plant is uprooted from one place and planted in another. Small seeds like those of amaranth, brinjal, chilli, capsicum, and tomato are first sown in seed beds/trays and transplanted later. Larger seeds like those of beans, lady's finger, pumpkin, cucumber and gourds can be directly planted. It is important to transplant carefully so the roots are not damaged. This is usually done when 2-4 true leaves appear on the seedling.

What is mulching?
Mulch is a layer of material spread over soil as protection. It helps prevent loss of moisture, prevents weeds from coming up and adds to soil fertility. Mulch could include grass cuttings, hay, coconut/areca husk, leaves, vegetable/fruit peels and other organic material.

How much water do plants need?
Seeds once planted, and seedlings should be watered gently with a watering can. Regular watering is a good rule of thumb so the plant does not droop. Mulching ensures that water is not lost by evaporation. Each plant has its own specific requirement. More watering is required in summer.

How must seeds be stored?
All seeds should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place, preferably in an air-tight container.
**amaranth**

Varieties: red, light green

**CROP NAME**

**LOCAL NAME**
(Kannada)

**PRONUNCIATION**
(ha-ree-vay)

**BOTANICAL NAME**
Amaranthus cruentus
Amaranthus viridis

---

**SOWING SEASON**
summer | monsoon | winter

**Time from sowing to:**

- **Sowing**
  - Sprinkle in beds

- **Germination**
  - Germination within 8 days

- **Transplantation**
  - Transplant in rows 9" apart when 4-6" tall

- **Harvest**
  - Only leaves can be harvested several times allowing for regrowth

**HARVEST DURATION**
90-120 DAYS (3-4 months)

**SHADE TOLERANCE**
some crops need full sun while others can grow in partial shade

**TIME FROM BEGINNING TO END OF HARVEST**

**CROP DRAWING**

White amaranth is self-seeding.

Plants are somewhat drought tolerant with healthy soil and mulching.
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Amaranth
Varieties: red, light green

Harvest
Only leaves can be harvested several times allowing for regrowth

45-60 DAYS (1.5-2 months)

Harvest Duration
90-120 DAYS (3-4 months)

Transplantation
Transplant in rows 9” apart when 4-6” tall

15-20 DAYS

Sowing
Sprinkle in beds

Germination within 8 days

MALNAD  BENGALURU

Sun or Shade

White amaranth is self seeding.

Plants are somewhat drought tolerant with healthy soil and mulching.
30 day bean

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
30 days

sowing

In rows 1/2” deep, 12” apart.
Stakes needed

Germination within 4-5 days

Quick growing, popular variety.

Phaseolus vulgaris

M ALNAD & BENGALURU
yard long bean

angikase

(ang-ee-ka-say)

Phaseolus vulgaris

harvest

Upto 100 pods per plant

60 DAYS (2 months)

HARVEST DURATION
180 days
(6 months)

sowing

In rows 3/4" deep, 8" apart.
Stakes needed

Germination within 7 days

Old variety.

Will not yield in heavy rain.

Fairly drought tolerant if mulched.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
**Lima Bean**

**Harvest**
- Upto 100 pods per plant
- **Harvest Duration:** 210 days (7 months)

**Sowing**
- Direct sowing.
- Grow onto a trellis or tree
- **Germination within 7 days**

**Phaseolus lunatus**

The plant is dormant during the monsoon and needs pruning. It will grow again and yield every winter for 3-4 years.

The seeds (not pods) are eaten fresh or dried.
winged bean

Psophocarpus tetragonolobus

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
120 days
(4 months)

sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds in a composted mound. Grow onto trellis or tree

Germination within 7 days

60-75 DAYS

Tender beans eaten.
The plant lives for 5-6 years, yielding each season.
Pods are about 5-6 inches long.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
hyacinth bean

Harvest

- Upto 100 pods per plant
- Harvest duration: 210 days (7 months)

Sowing

- Direct sowing
- Grow onto a trellis or tree
- Germination within 7 days

MALNAD & BENGALURU

Dolichos lablab

The plant is dormant during the monsoon and needs pruning. It will grow again and yield every winter for 3-4 years.

The seeds and pods can be eaten tender.

Seeds are also dried and eaten.
brinjal

Varieties:
bili, bonda (metre), cholu, daas, hithalu, musuku, vadhiraja gulla

 HARVEST DURATION
720 days
(2 years except hithalu)

harvest

90
DAYS (3 months)

transplantation

30-45
DAYS

sowing

Sprinkle in beds and cover with compost

Germination in 7-10 days

Plant 2 feet apart in rows

MALNAD & BENGALURU

Solanum melangena

Brinjal is somewhat drought tolerant.

Each plant is known to yield up to 50 kg of brinjal over a period of 2-3 years, if cared for well.
maggay cucumber

HARVEST DURATION
45 days
(1.5 months)

75 DAYS (2.5 months)

12” apart in rectangular rows that are at least 6” deep

Germination in 7 days

Sow in beds

MALNAD & BENGALURU

All parts of the vegetable can be eaten including seeds and skin.

Long shelf life of upto 10 months if stored in a dry, cool place.
spiny cucumber

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
60-90 days
(2-3 months)

sowing

Direct planting
6-8" apart
and train on
ground
or trellis

Germination
within 7 days

Salad or cooking vegetable.

If harvested when fully ripe,
shelf life is 5-6 months
in a dry place.

Seeds can be made into
juice which is very cooling.

MALNAD | BENGALURU
yeray cucumber
(yay-ray sa-va-thay)

Cucumis sativus

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
60-90 days
(2-3 months)
Fruits throughout the year

sowing

60-90
DAYS (2-3 months)

Direct planting
6-8” apart
and train on ground
or trellis

Germination within 7 days

Quick growing with prolific yield.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
Varieties:
black, bugdi, gokarn, hithalu, kutumba, mirchi, rajnelli, sooji, santhe

**harvest**

**HARVEST DURATION**
Can vary from 3 months to 1 year, depending on variety & care

**60 DAYS (2 months)**

**transplantation**

Transplant in rows 12” apart when 4” tall

**15 DAYS**

**sowing**

Sow in beds

Germination within 7 days

Chillies are originally from South America.

The Malnad has numerous local varieties from sweet to pungent.
ash gourd

HARVEST DURATION
90-120 days
(3-4 months)

90-120 DAYS (3-4 months)

transplantation

If transplanting, take care not to damage roots.

sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds in well manured mounds (during rains) or pits

Germination within 7-8 days

Highly medicinal.

Needs plenty of manure and water. Can be trained onto the roof or creep on the ground. Hand pollination is usually needed for fruiting.
bitter gourd

Varieties:
bili, gubbi, hasiru

Momordica charantia

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
365 days
(1 year)

sowing

60 DAYS (2 months)

Germination
within
8-15 days

Cattle don’t forage on bitter gourd. Can be grown on trellis, stake or fence.

Plant fresh seeds as they are viable for 3-6 months at the most.
bottle gourd

Varieties:
long, tamboora

Lagenaria siceraria

harvest
Fruit about 2-3 feet long

120 days (4 months)

transplantation
Take care to keep the roots intact

sowing
Plant in manured pits (or mounds during rains) & train on the roof/ground

Germination within 7-8 days

Used as salad, cooked vegetable and for sweets.

Shelf life upto 1 month if stored in a cool, dry place.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
pumpkin

Varieties:
long, round

harvest

Upto 8 fruits from each plant

90-120 DAYS (3-4 months)

transplantation

If transplanting, take care not to damage roots.

sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds in well manured mounds (during rains) or pits

Germination within 7-8 days

MALNAD & BENGALURU

Numerous varieties of different sizes and colours.

Plant needs plenty of manure and water. Can be trained onto the roof or creep on the ground. Hand pollination needed most times for fruiting. Flowers and tendrils (kudi) eaten as a vegetable in gojju, hashi and palya.

Shelf life 3-4 months.
ridge gourd

Varieties:
short, medium, long

Luffa acutangula

Harvest

HARVEST DURATION
60-90 days
(2-3 months)

75 DAYS (2.5 months)

Sowing

Germination within 7-8 days

Plant in rows
8” apart and
make a trellis

Easy to grow and digest.

Used in soup, dosai,
gojju, paysa, chutney
and as vegetable.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
sponge gourd

HARVEST DURATION
730 days
(2 years)

60 DAYS (2 months)

sowing
2-3 seeds in a pit at the base of a tree or support

Germination in 7 days

Luffa cylindrica
syn. aegyptiaca

Prolific yield, and no known pests.

When tender, can be used as a vegetable.

When mature and dry, the outer skin and seeds are removed, and the remaining fibrous lattice can be used as a natural scrubber (loofah).
lady’s finger

Varieties:
- gubbi, kempu,
elu elay, ethinakodu

Harvest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Duration</th>
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<td>90 days (3 months)</td>
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60 Days (2 months)

Sowing

18” apart in rows

Germination within 10-12 days

Sun

Hardy plant.

Cook with tamarind or buttermilk to reduce mucilage.

Harvest regularly to keep up yield.
**Purslane**

**Harvest**

- **Harvest Duration**: 180 days (6 months)
- **60 Days (2 months)**

**Transplantation**

- **15-20 Days**
- **Sprinkle in beds and lightly cover with compost**
- **Germination within 8-10 days**

**Sowing**

- Plant 6” apart when seedlings have 4 leaves and are able to stand upright

**Conditions**

- **MALNAD**
- **BENGALURU**

- Pour cowdung slurry once in 15-20 days.
- Keep earthing up plant base.
- Pinching tips regularly helps the plant grow and spread out.
- Plant rots in rain.
Malabar Spinach
Varieties: hasiru, kempu

Harvest
Harvest Duration
300 days
(10 months)

60 Days (2 months)

Transplantation
Plant 16" apart in rows when 6 leaves appear. Provide trellis/support

15-20 Days

Sowing
Sprinkle in beds and lightly cover with compost

Germination within 7 days

Sun or Shade

MALNAD & BENGALURU

Plant rich in iron.

Pinching tips regularly helps plant to grow vigorously.

Grows well at wash water outlets (chemical free).

Grows from cuttings also.
tomato
(toe-may-toe)
*Lycopersicon lycopersicum*

**Harvest**

**Harvest Duration**
150 days (5 months)

**Transplantation**

Transplant in rows 6" apart when the seedling is about 5" high

**Sowing**

Sow in beds

Germination within 7-10 days

Staking needed, and each plant has to be tied to the stake to help it grow.
The generic term “tuber” has been used to cover tubers, rhizomes and corms.

All tubers may be planted in the ground or appropriately sized pots or sacks. They store well in the earth.

In open ground, tubers may be grown in spaces using well rings one on top of another to curtail bandicoots.

Unless specified, tubers are harvested on a one time basis.
arrowroot

harvest

180 DAYS (6 months)

planting

Direct planting of eye buds in beds 8” apart. Cover with compost

Germination within 15 days

Tubers harvested, ground, and immersed in water for 3 days to remove bitterness. Dried and used as baby food or for convalescents. Long shelf life.
colocasia

harvest

180 DAYS onwards

planting

Direct planting of small corms to the side of the main one in beds 8” apart or in 1 foot deep trenches for bigger varieties, covered as the plant grows, with loose soil, compost and ash. Basal topping up and mulching important

Germination within 15 days

Colocasia (Taro) has many varieties from small round tubers to 5 foot long ones. Planting method depends on variety. Certain varieties like cheep kesu, mottay kesu & kari kesu need to be boiled in tamarind water to prevent itching in mouth. Shelf life is upto a year or more in a cool, dry, dark place. Leaves of some used to make patrode.
elephant foot yam

365 DAYS (1 year)

Direct planting of corm eye buds in 1-2 foot deep basins covered with loose soil, compost and ash. Basal topping up and mulching important

Germination within 15 days

Corm stores well and can be cut in segments and used. Cooling. Can be made into vegetable and sambar.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
ginger

Harvest

Harvest Duration
Year round (several years)

180 Days (6 months)

Planting

Direct planting of rhizome eye buds in beds 6 inches apart covered with loose soil, compost and ash. Basal topping up and mulching important

Germination within 15 days

Pieces can be broken off and used, while plant continues growing and yielding. Tuber used as condiment, for herbal teas, pickles, juices, cough mix, digestive & botanical pest control.
mango ginger  ಮಾವೀನ ವೃಂ (maa-vee-na shoon-tee)
Curcuma amada

harvest

HARVEST DURATION
year round
(several years)

300
DAYS (10 months)

planting

Direct planting of rhizome eye buds in beds 6 inches apart with rows 1 foot apart, covered with compost and mulch

Germination within 15 days

Tuber belongs to the ginger family. Exudes aroma of unripe mango and used to make fresh chutney, pickle and tambuli.
sweet potato

(see-hee ge-na-su)

Ipomoea batatas

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**harvest**

180 DAYS (6 months)

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**planting**

Direct planting of stem cuttings in beds 1 foot apart with rows also 1 foot apart. Earth up for better production

- Takes root within 15 days

---

Root eaten steamed with salt and lemon, or as vegetable, in sambar and even made into holigay. Young leaves good as greens.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
Tapioca

Harvest

240 DAYS (8 months)

Planting

Direct planting of cuttings in rows with mulching

Takes root within 15 days

Tapioca is also known as cassava.

Hardy and does not need much care. Tuber stores well in the soil/ground if attached to plant or upto a week post harvest.
turmeric

Curcuma longa

Harvest

300 DAYS (10 months)

Planting

Direct planting of rhizome eye buds in beds 6 inches apart covered with loose soil and compost

Germination within 15 days

Tuber highly medicinal.

Harvested, washed, cut into pieces, sun dried, milled, sieved and powder stored to be used as condiment. Fresh tuber used in cooking, pickles, tambuli, & gojju.
Yam

Harvest

180 DAYS (6 months)

Planting

Direct planting of eye buds in pits, next to trees or trellis. Cover with compost/rich manure

Germination within 15 days (weather dependent)

Several Dioscorea species exist including wild ones. Shelf life of harvested tuber up to 6 months. Yields aerial, edible tubers which can also be planted. Mother tuber eaten, roasted, boiled or steamed.
yam

harvest

240-365
DAYS
(8 months to 1 year)

planting

Direct planting of eye buds in pits, next to trees or trellis. Cover with compost/rich manure

Germination within 15 days (weather dependent)

Several Dioscorea species exist including wild ones. Shelf life of harvested tuber up to 6 months. Yields aerial, edible tubers which can also be planted. Mother tuber eaten, roasted boiled or steamed.

Dioscorea bulbifera
Flowers

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balsam

FLOWERING DURATION
60 days
(2 months)

bloom time

60 DAYS (2 months)

transplantation

15 DAYS

sowing

Sprinkle in beds/pots

Germination within 7 days

SUN OR SHADE

Malnad Bengaluru

Impatiens spp.
butterfly pea (shan-kha push-pa)

Clitoria ternatea

FLOWERING DURATION
perennial that will flower for many years

90 DAYS (3 months)

sowing
in beds/pots

Germination within 8-10 days

Flower medicinal, used to make juice and in religious rituals.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
Canna

FLOWERING DURATION
year round perennial

90 DAYS (3 months)

Sowing
In beds/pots

Germination
within 10 days

Thrives in water logged areas.
Suckers also used for planting.

MALNAD & BENGALURU
cosmos

FLOWERING DURATION
60 days
(2 months)

45 DAYS (1.5 months)

transplantation
Optional

15 DAYS

sowing
Germination within 8-10 days

Scatter in beds

SUN OR SHADE

Plants are self seeding and you can have a permanent bed of cosmos once planted.

MALNAD & BENGALURU

(kay-tha-ki)
Cosmos spp.
**four O'clock flower**

( Сан-јे ма-lli-gaу)

*Mirabilis jalapa*

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**Bloom Time**

**Flowering Duration**
180 days
(6 months)

---

**Sowing**

In beds/pots

**Germination**
Within 10 days

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*Ornamental, multi-coloured, hardy, wayside flowering plant.*
**marigold**

(chen-doo hoo-vu)

(gon-day hoo-vu)

*Tagetes spp.*

---

**bloom time**

FLOWERING DURATION

60 days

(2 months)

60 DAYS (2 months)

**transplantation**

Optional

15 DAYS

6” apart

**sowing**

Sprinkle in beds/pots

Germination within 7 days

---

Hardy plant - ideal for borders and hedges.

Flowers and leaves have insecticidal properties.

Used as companion plants in food gardens.

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MALNAD & BENGALURU
**Zinnia**

**FLOWERING DURATION**
- 60 days
- (2 months)

**90 DAYS (3 months)**

**bloom time**

**transplantation**
- Plant 10" apart when seedlings have 4 leaves and are able to stand upright
- Germination within 8-10 days

**sowing**
- In beds/pots

**SUN OR SHADE**

**Hardy multi-coloured ornamental.**

**Flowers stay a long time.**

**MALNAD & BENGALURU**
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## Planting Calendar

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## Planting Calendar

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| Flowers               |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Balsam                |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Butterfly Pea         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Canna                 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Cosmos                |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Four O’clock Flower   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Marigold              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Zinnia                |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

This is a seasonal planting chart for the Malnad where the monsoon rains are heavy (250-800 cm per annum). Bengaluru and other drier areas would have a longer planting (sowing) season.

= planting period
Notes
Notes