



## Growing Heirloom Cucumbers - Beit Alpha

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Fine flavor and high yields? that's what you'll get when you grow Beit Alpha Cucumbers. This heirloom is crunchy, very sweet, and delicious. The skins are so tender there's no peeling required.

Slice them for sandwiches, use them as a base for soups, or try the tangy cucumber salad recipe below.

This warm weather vegetable is a vigorous grower, and beautiful in the garden with large showy leaves. Plant in late spring when the soil has warmed, directly into the garden. Use a rich, well-drained soil. Thin to 12 inches in a row or plant three plants per mound every 36 inches. To save space, you can train cucumbers to grow up a trellis. They thrive with plenty of moisture and full sun.

Cucumber beetles are the biggest concern when growing cucurbits. They carry bacteria which causes a disease called bacterial wilt. For the backyard gardener, row covers or screens can be used to protect small plants. There is usually a peak in beetle activity in spring that lasts two to four weeks so planting a little later can sometimes be an advantage.

Harvest Beit Alpha fruits when they are about 8 inches in length and 1½ inches in diameter. Keep mature cucumbers picked for a higher fruit set. Matures in 55-65 days.

Beit Alpha originated in the late 1940s at a kibbutz farm in Israel. Specifically, the Jezreel Valley which contains natural springs, and some of the most fertile farmland in Israel.

### Tangy Cucumber Salad

*Serves eight*

#### Ingredients:

2/3 cup apple cider vinegar  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cups Beit Alpha cucumbers, thinly sliced  
1 red onion, thinly sliced  
1½ teaspoons dill, chopped

#### Directions:

Combine vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper in a glass mixing bowl. Stir until sugar dissolves. Add olive oil; stir.

Add cucumbers, onions, and dill. Combine, cover, and chill for two hours before serving. Serve alongside of your favorite meal.

Enjoy your harvest!

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