

Cucumber

Cucumis sativus (Cucurbitaceae)

Fast Facts:

Acres in Washington: 2,072 Per Acre Value: \$3,000 Number of Growers: 345 *Statistics Provided by the Washington Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS).

Description of crop:

Cucumbers are viney, annual plants. Since they are susceptible to light frost damage, they are planted from seeds or transplants after the last frost. Cucumbers mature rapidly and are pollinated by bees. Slicing and pickling cucumbers are the most common types: more than 90 percent of the cucumbers in Washington are slicing cucumbers. Slicing types are long and dark green, have white spines and are used for the fresh market. Pickling types require a shorter growing season than slicing types and typically have a blotchy, warty, light green surface. Most cucumbers are harvested by hand; about 25 percent of the processing cucumbers are machine harvested.

Key pests:

Weeds are the most significant pests. Lambsquarter, shepardspurse, pigweeds, chickweed, hairy nightshade and mustards are all problems. Yellow nut sedge is becoming a problem and may be brought in to fields by geese. Disease problems include angular leaf spot, powdery mildew and stem rot. Verticillium wilt is a soil disease that is increasing as a problem. Damping off is another disease that tends to attack when plants are about 1-2" tall and cool weather comes. Insects are seldom a significant problem except for aphids. Diseases are not a problem in cucumber grown in eastern Washington.

Key pesticides:

For weed control ethafluralin (Sonalan, Curbit) is effective. For angular leaf spot you can apply fixed copper products but this may also cause some stunting and leaf chlorosis. Powdery mildew and damping off are controlled with use of Cabrio, and Folicur. The stem rot can be controlled with Chlorothalonil (Bravo). Verticillium wilt is controlled with Vapam. Damping-off is controlled with seed treated with Allegiance, Captan or Maxim. Aphids can be controlled with Assail, Capture or Admire.

Critical pest control issues:

For diseases like angular leaf spot it is best to avoid overhead watering and plant disease free seed and resistant varieties. This will not guarantee that plants will

never be infected but they will suffer less. If infected, growers should rotate crops and avoid planting cucumbers or related crops in the same location for at least two years. After dealing with infected plants wash your hands and dispose of infected materials, don't compost them. Cucumbers are diminishing as a crop here in Washington. The state's only pickle buyer, Dean Foods, says it is cheaper to source cucumbers from other areas than buy in Washington State because of our higher minimum wage. Growers have indicated that with less production pressure they have had fewer problems with insects and diseases. They are able to rotate more and many have started using drip irrigation, which has reduced weed problems.

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**Location
of Production:**

Whatcom, Skagit, King, Pierce, Thurston, Lewis, Clark, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Clallam, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Snohomish, Stevens, Spokane, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla and Whitman counties



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