

Chapter 1. Commercial Vegetable Production in Florida¹

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Vegetable production remains a tremendous industry for Florida in terms of acreage and value. Including vegetables, melons, potatoes, and strawberries, production occurred on approximately 251,011 acres and generated more than \$1.34 billion in gross sales in 2016, which ranks second among all the states. Growing seasons are well defined by the peninsular geography, allowing Florida to serve as the main vegetable supplier during late fall, winter, and early spring months to the United States. Although more than 40 vegetable crops are commercially planted in the state, Florida ranks in the top three on production value of tomato, bell pepper, snap bean, squash, sweet corn, watermelon, cabbage, cucumber, and strawberry (Table 1).

The objective of this publication is to provide updated information on crop cultivars, pesticide labels, and certain practices for vegetable production in Florida. Suggested practices are guidelines for growers to plan farm activities and are always subject to review using the latest scientific data available.

Table 1. Vegetable production acreage and value in Florida.

Crop	Planted Acres	Value (million US\$)	US Rank
Tomato	30,000	382.2	1
Strawberry	10,800	449.7	2
Bell pepper	13,500	209.7	2
Sweet corn	37,600	160.0	2
Potato	29,300	117.0	11
Snap bean	28,200	105.6	1
Watermelon	22,500	123.3	1
Squash	6,000	30.0	2
Cabbage	8,500	49.4	3
Cucumber	11,000	66.0	1

Source: Vegetables—2015–2016 summary, NASS, USDA.

Web Links to Additional Information on Vegetable Production Topics

UF/IFAS Extension provides information through the Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) found at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. Below is a partial list of EDIS publications pertaining to vegetable production for further information beyond the *Vegetable Production Handbook of Florida*.

1. This document is HS710, one of a series of the Horticultural Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Revised annually. Most recent revision June 2023. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
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Vegetable Crop Production

Complete *Vegetable Production Handbook*: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV292>

Commercial Transplant Production in Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV104>

Introduction to Organic Crop Production: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV118>

Value Added Agriculture: Is It Right for Me?: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FE638>

Farm to School: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_farm_to_school

Row Covers for Commercial Vegetable Culture in Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV201>

Fertility and Irrigation

Commercial Vegetable Fertilization Principles: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV009>

Soil and Fertilizer Management for Vegetable Production in Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV101>

Controlled-Release and Slow-Release Fertilizers as Nutrient Management Tools: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS1255>

Cover Crops for South Florida Commercial Vegetable Producers: <https://doi.org/10.32473/edis-ss461-2006>

Principles and Practices of Irrigation Management for Vegetables: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV107>

Drip Irrigation: the BMP Era—an Integrated Approach to Water and Fertilizer Management for Vegetables Grown with Plasticulture: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS172>

Postharvest Quality and Handling Resources

UF/IFAS Postharvest Quality & Technology: <https://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu/postharvest/>

UF/IFAS EDIS (Electronic Data Information Source): https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_postharvest

Postharvest Technology: <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu>

Marketing and Regulatory Resources

Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services (FDACS): <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Marketing-and-Development>

US Grade Standards for Fruits and Vegetables: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/standards>

National Agricultural Statistics Service: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/fl/>

National Nutrient Database: <https://www.ars.usda.gov>

National Organic Program: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm>

Food Safety Resources

Food Safety on the Farm: An Overview of Good Agricultural Practices: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FS135>

The Food Safety Modernization Act and the FDA Facility Registration Program: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FS231>

UF/IFAS Food Safety: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_food_safety/

CDC: Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dfwed/>

FDA: US Food and Drug Administration: <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/default.htm>

Fumigation

Maximizing the Efficacy of Soil Fumigant Applications for Raised-Bed Plasticulture Systems of Florida: <https://journals.flvc.org/edis/article/view/118553>

Pesticide Safety

Pesticide Provisions of the Florida Agricultural Worker Safety Act (FAWSA): <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI078>

Pesticide Safety: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/CV108>

Pesticide Labels: Signal Words: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI137>

Minimizing Honey Bee Exposure to Pesticides: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1027>

Pest Management

Integrated Disease Management for Vegetable Crops in

Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PP111>

Florida Nematode Management Guide: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/nematode_management

Weed Management: <https://doi.org/10.32473/edis-cv113-2006>

Vegetable Pest Insects: https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_vegetable_pest_insects