



WHEAT

Triticum aestivum

Wheat is simple to grow and well-adapted to cool climates. By far the most plentiful grain in our western diets, wheat is an important crop to grow locally. Wheat can be planted in spring or fall.

PLANTING

Wheat does well in a wide range of soil types. Plant in the fall (late Sept. to early Nov.) or in early spring (late March through Mid-April). Work up a fine seed bed and avoid adding too much nitrogen. We plant our wheat in rows 6" apart with seeds 1" apart for easier weeding. You can also try broad-casting seed in blocks or wide rows.

GROWING METHODS

MAINTENANCE

One late May weeding was all we needed. Wheat does not usually require water because it dries down during the drought season.

HARVEST

Harvest wheat when the seeds rub out of the seed heads easily and cannot be dented with a fingernail. Our planting took 4 months to mature. Pick individual seed heads off the stalk or cut stalks with a sickle and stack with seed heads all in the same direction.

THRESHING

Threshing is quicker if you have harvested just the seed heads. Either way, put the material on a tarp on a hard surface and shuffle-dance to rub the seeds out of the seed heads. Winnow in front of a steady fan to clear off the chaff.

PROCESSING

SEED-SAVING/STORAGE

For seed-saving, just put aside some of the seed for next year. To ensure the seed is dry, we usually leave ours in paper bags in a warm, dry location, for a month or two, then store in Rubbermaid bins.

COOKING TIPS

Although wheat is mainly known for its use as a flour, it makes an excellent cooked whole grain (simmer for 1 hour at 1 cup grain to 2 ½ cups water). As a raw food option, sprouted wheat berries are highly nutritious.

YIELDS & LABOR

We yielded 3-6 lbs (9-12 cups) per 100 SF. Reportedly yields up to 20 lbs per 100 SF. In our small trials we spent about 1 hour per pound of grain in total labor. Labor needs would be reduced on a larger scale.

BBGP RESEARCH

VARIETIES

We have successfully grown Ethiopian, Lavras, and Sonoran Wheat. Wheat comes in five main classes: white, soft red winter, durum, hard red spring, and hard red winter. All have different properties and uses.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fall-sown wheat is generally more productive than spring-sown wheat, and matures a few weeks earlier. Fall-sown wheat is a good option for soggy soils that are unable to be worked up early in the spring. That said, winter wheat is not as able to tolerate wet soils because the wetter the soil, the less likely wheat will survive cold temperatures.