

Onion, bunching types

Allium cepa, *Allium fistulosum*

Many bunching onions, also known as scallions or green onions, are ready to harvest 60 days after sowing. They make an excellent container crop for gardeners with limited space. Some, such as 'White Lisbon' are immature bulbing onions while others, such as 'Tokyo White Long', are a perennial species that will never form a bulb.

TIP – Unless stored in ideal conditions, onion seed has poor longevity, so order only what you will use in one season.

Location and soil Onions grow well in loose, well-drained soil that has plenty of organic matter—a raised bed is ideal. They are sensitive to acidic soils and prefer a pH over 6.0. A sunny site is best, but plants will tolerate part shade.

When to Plant Sow seed directly into the garden in spring as soon as the soil can be worked. For a continuous harvest, make successive sowings every 2-3 weeks as long as daytime temperatures remain under 80°F. Even in the North, seed may be sown in fall for a spring harvest.

Seed depth and Spacing Sprinkle the small seeds sparingly in wide rows, so seeds are about ½ inch apart. Space rows 12 to 18 inches apart, and cover with a

dusting of sifted compost or a thin layer of sterile potting mix. These materials will not form a crust, as fine soil is apt to do.

Germination Seeds can take from 4 days to 2 weeks or more to emerge, depending on soil temperature. Quickest germination occurs when soil temperature is between 60° and 85°F. Keep the seedbed evenly moist until seedlings appear.



Thinning Ideally, seedlings will sprout ½- to 1-inch apart, and you won't need to thin. If seedlings are too close, thin to 1-inch apart when they are about 2 inches tall.

Care Weed early and often—onions don't compete well with weeds. Water young seedlings frequently. After they become established, water deeply as needed. In cold winter areas, mulch fall plantings with several inches of straw or leaves before the ground freezes, removing the covering in early spring.

Fertilize Plant onions in a bed amended with compost and apply a side-dressing of slow-release granular organic fertilizer after seedlings emerge.

Harvest Hand pull onions when they are ¼ to ½ inch in diameter at the base. They pull most easily after a good soaking. Green onions can be harvested at any stage, so leave them in the ground and pull them as needed.

Nutrition Excellent source of Vitamins A, C, and K, and a good source of iron and folate.

	White Lisbon	Tokyo Long White
	 <small>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</small>	 <small>© Nova-Photo-Graphik</small>
Description	<i>Allium cepa</i> . Long white stalks have a mild flavor, which becomes more pungent as the bulbs swell. Open pollinated.	<i>Allium fistulosum</i> . This non-bulbing Japanese heirloom produces long white stalks with flavorful green tops. Plants can be over 2 feet tall.
Culture	Traditionally planted in spring, 'White Lisbon' can be fall-sown as well. Good choice for container growing.	Best for spring and summer planting, this bunching onion is known for its heat tolerance. Good for containers.
Days to harvest	60-80	65-95