



Grow Your Own Organic Cotton

First and foremost prepare your soil. Cotton should be planted in well prepared seedbeds that are firm warm and moist. Planting should be based on soil temperature and the weather outlook for about a month after planting.

Try to plant when soil temperatures are at least 65 F at six to eight inches below soil surface and take these readings first thing in the morning for a few days to be sure. The root or radicle tip is easily damaged by chilling, lack of oxygen, or too much moisture in the soil. Seed germination and emergence are the foundation of your total crop.

Plant the seed 1-1.5 inches deep and space according to your preferred method of equidistance spacing of 12 inches in the bed or in rows 36-42 between rows and plants 10-12 inches apart in the row. Under favorable conditions seedlings should emerge in 5 to 15 days after the seed is planted. As the plants begin to grow keep them well cultivated to avoid competitive weeds and to keep the soil in good condition.

Usually five to eight weeks after planting you see the first signs of the “squares” or the fruiting sites of the plants. This is where you will be harvesting your cotton from later on. Statistically about 50% of your lint yield will come from the squares closest to the main stalk and about 15% percent from those further out. Remember some of the branches are “fruiting” or “reproductive” branches and some are “vegetative” bearing no blooms or fruit.

Blooms arrive about 60 to 80 days after planting or 20 to 27 days after the squares develop. The cotton bloom is “perfect” or has both male and female parts. Flowers open in the morning pollination occurs and then the petals begin to turn pink and fade away. The petals of American upland cotton are white or cream colored and those of Pima or extra long staple cotton are yellow.

The bloom now called the boll will develop over the next 45 to 70 days depending on weather and if you plant an early to midseason or late-season variety. The first bolls usually open 105 to 130 days after planting. Bolls set later may take a couple of weeks or so longer.

As the bolls open completely and when about 75% percent of them seem to be dry you can begin your harvest. Others may mature as well depending on weather conditions. Harvest can continue for a period because of cool temperatures.

Don't forget that cotton also is a beautiful potted plant that can accent a patio or other areas and even can be grown indoors with proper care.

Have fun.....

Interesting notes:

The average person can pick 200 to 250 pounds of seeded cotton in a good day.

From one bale of cotton (500 lbs) you can make:

- 21,960 Women's Handkerchiefs
- 6,436 Women's knit briefs
- 409 Skirts
- 4,321 Mid calf socks
- 765 Men's dress shirts
- 2,104 Boxer shorts
- 2,419 Jockey shorts
- 215 Jeans
- 1,217 T-shirts
- 3,085 Diapers
- 249 Sheets
- 1,256 Pillow cases
- 690 Terry Bath Towels