

## EGGPLANTS LIKE IT HOT!

By DANIEL MILLIKEN

[HomeshowGardenPros.com](http://HomeshowGardenPros.com)

Eggplants are native to southeast Asia (likely India, China, Thailand, Burma, etc), where they have been used for thousands of years and still grow wild as a perennial.



While most enjoy an eggplant's edible fruit, wild eggplant vegetative parts and roots, including the black round fruited *Solanum americanum* and *S. insanum*, that have been documented as a sedative and skin (rashes, sores) treatment. Crushed seeds were used to treat toothaches. Fruit of our common

elongated pinkish-purple *S. melongena* is said to have potential health benefits, like alleviating liver issues.

Grilled, fried, sautéed, baked, breaded, stuffed, as baba ghanoush or roasted, this versatile edible can easily serve as a main dish or side.

**THEY LIKE IT HOT, SUNNY, AND FERTILE** — Like their Solanaceae family cousins (peppers, tomatoes), eggplants prefer hot weather, only even hotter!



[www.natureswayresources.com](http://www.natureswayresources.com)

Raised beds are a great option. Loose soil is better for eggplant roots. They can get quite large. Eggplants grow well in containers, too. Use a 5-gallon container per plant and fill with moistened organic potting mix. Use an organic, soil-focused, balanced fertilizer at planting; supplement throughout season.

Rich organic granular fertilizer is a good option for container plantings. In my experience, compost typically results in waterlogged soil over time. Plain, unamended potting soil does not offer any nutrient value. Keep in mind containers dry out faster, need to be watered frequently.

Plants typically grow at least 24" wide and tall. Space appropriately to allow for airflow. Eggplant thrives in 6+ sun hours a day, and fertile, well-draining soil. Mix a couple handfuls of compost into each hole as seedlings are transplanted into garden. The best way to ensure fertile soil is to buy excellent [Nature's Way Resources](http://www.natureswayresources.com) soil. You can get your soil tested but buying and integrating excellent compost always helps.

If you forego soil improvement efforts, keep an eye on your plants. If they thrive, great! If not, and it's hot and sunny just how they like it, it may be the soil. For the long term, encourage healthy soil by rotating crops, diversifying your plantings, and adding a couple of inches of fresh organic compost each year. In the short term, consider applying 3 pounds of good organic fertilizer to every 100 square feet of planted area.



**HomeShow Garden Pros with Dany Millikin**

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