



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service



VEGETABLES

ACREAGE- SPRING QUARTER (APR., MAY, JUN.)

Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
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FLORIDA

The following narrative relates to Florida's vegetable crops to be harvested during April, May, June, and July.

January started with above normal average temperatures, but the warm weather was followed by record cold temperatures throughout the month. Several regions from the Panhandle down to the southern Peninsula experienced hard freezes and nightly frosts. Daytime highs ranged from the 50s to 70s. Drought conditions persisted in many parts of the state. Heavier rains mid-month brought some relief. Soil moisture ratings were mostly adequate to short by the month's end. January's cold and dry weather hampered vegetable growth. Cabbage, endive, escarole, and sweet corn growth was delayed due to cold temperatures. Growers in Dixie County prepared watermelon fields.

February began with above normal temperatures. A cold front swept across the State during the second week resulting in temperature lows ranging from the 20s to the 40s. Mid-month temperatures were near normal. The month ended with above normal temperatures which ranged from lows in the 50s and highs in the 80s. There were adequate amounts of rain in northern and central Florida towards the beginning of the month. Scattered showers continued during mid-month ranging from traces to four inches. The majority of the State received little rainfall at the end of the month. The month ended with topsoil moisture ratings of 47 percent short or less and 53 percent adequate or more. In early February, field preparations were underway for bell peppers, snap beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, and watermelons. Mid-month rains hindered planting and harvesting of vegetables in central and southern Peninsula regions. Late month clear and dry conditions allowed fieldwork to progress at normal pace. Growers in Washington County were busy laying plastic for vegetables. Suwannee County watermelon producers completed field preparations for planting.

March began with average temperatures ranging between five to seven degrees above normal. Lows were mostly in the 40s and 50s and highs were mostly in the 80s. The following week, cooler temperatures prevailed and resulted in several freeze and frost reports. Late month temperatures ranged from seasonal to above average temperatures. Early March showers brought little relief from the dry weather. The U.S. Drought Monitor indicated that drought conditions were present in over 85 percent of Florida. Mid-month showers were widespread and improved topsoil moisture ratings to 72 percent adequate and 28 percent short. Dry weather prevailed until the end-of-the month's widespread heavy showers ranging mostly from two to five inches of precipitation. In early March, vegetable planting was delayed due to drought. Mid-month showers interrupted some field activities and cooler temperatures slowed the growth of tomatoes. Gulf County producers were getting ready to plant watermelons, corn, and peas, but some growers continued to wait for warmer weather before planting. Highlands County vegetable growers were planting watermelons, snap beans, and other vegetables. Vegetable crops responded favorably to the late month warmer temperatures; however, the heavy rains stopped field work and battered some young crops.

Snap beans: Area for spring harvest is forecast at 10,000 acres, up 2 percent from the previous year. Land preparation for the snap bean crop began in February. Generally clear and dry conditions allowed field work to progress on schedule in most areas. In central Florida, planting was delayed due to drought.

Cabbage: Area for harvest is forecast at 3,500, up 17 percent from last year. Planting of the spring cabbage crop was active in mid-February. Most cutting of the cabbage crop is expected to be completed by the end of May.

Cucumbers: Acreage for harvest is forecast at 7,000, down 11 percent from last year. Dry weather was present during planting season. Cool temperatures delayed growth.

Bell Peppers: Area for harvest is forecast at 7,600, down 1 percent from the previous year. Mid-February rainfall hindered fieldwork in some central and southern Peninsula regions. Clear, dry conditions near the end of February allowed fieldwork to progress at normal pace. In central Florida, planting was delayed during early March due to drought.

Tomatoes: Harvested acreage is forecast at 16,200, up 5 percent from last year. Drier than normal conditions required producers to use more irrigation. Periods of cooler temperatures hindered growth.

Watermelons: Harvested acres are forecast at 22,900, down 7 percent from the previous year. Land preparations were underway by late January. Planting of watermelons was active from late January through March. Growers in Suwannee County began plantings by mid-March. Elsewhere, watermelon planting was active when weather permitted across the State.

UNITED STATES

General: The prospective area for harvest of 11 selected fresh market vegetables during the spring quarter is forecast at 193,680 acres, up 1 percent from last year. Acreage increases for cabbage, carrots, sweet corn, and tomatoes more than offset acreage declines for snap beans, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, head lettuce, and bell peppers. Broccoli area remains unchanged. Melon acreage for spring harvest is forecast at 68,000 acres, down 3 percent from last year. Cantaloupe and watermelon acreages are down 1 percent and 5 percent, respectively, from 2010. Honeydew acreage is up 8 percent from last year. Asparagus area for spring harvest is forecast at 28,000 acres, unchanged from last year. Strawberry area for harvest is forecast at 49,800 acres, up 1 percent from a year ago.

Snap beans: Area for spring harvest is forecast at 16,600 acres, down 3 percent from last year. However, planting proceeded on schedule in most areas by February.

Cabbage: Area for spring harvest is forecast at 7,280 acres, up 4 percent from last year. Prospects are favorable for the cabbage crop due to adequate soil moisture. In Texas, growing conditions are reported to be excellent despite an early February freeze.

Cucumbers: Spring harvested area is forecast at 8,300 acres, down 10 percent from 2010. In Texas, growers reported some damage due to below freezing temperatures during the first week of February.

Tomatoes: Area for harvest is forecast at 26,200 acres, up 4 percent from 2010. California growers increased their spring fresh market tomato acreage to meet market demand.

Watermelons: Area intended for harvest is forecast at 38,700 acres, down 5 percent from last year. In California, growers in the Southern San Joaquin Valley are preparing fields for planting of the spring melon crop with harvest expected to begin in June.

Selected Fresh Market Vegetables and Melons: Area Harvested by Crop, State, and Total, Spring Season, 2009-2010 and Forecasted Area 2011

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Spring acreage			2011 area for harvest as percent of 2010 (percent)
		Harvested		For harvest 2011 (acres)	
		2009 (acres)	2010 (acres)		
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	April-July	10,700	9,800	10,000	102
Georgia	May-June	6,900	5,700	5,000	88
New Jersey	June-August	1,600	1,600	1,600	100
Total		19,200	17,100	16,600	97
CABBAGE:					
Florida	April-June	2,760	3,000	3,500	117
Georgia	April-June	2,300	2,400	2,100	88
New Jersey	May-August	900	1,000	1,100	110
Texas	April-June	500	600	580	97
Total		6,460	7,000	7,280	104
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	April-July	28,000	27,600	29,000	105
California	April-June	12,500	13,200	13,100	99
Total		40,500	40,800	42,100	103
CUCUMBERS:					
Florida	April-July	8,200	7,900	7,000	89
South Carolina	May-August	1,000	1,000	1,000	100
Texas	April-June	300	300	300	100
Total		9,500	9,200	8,300	90
BELL PEPPERS:¹					
Florida	April-July	7,800	7,700	7,600	99
TOMATOES:					
Florida	April-July	16,800	15,500	16,200	105
California	April-June	7,500	7,200	7,500	104
South Carolina	May-August	1,900	2,400	2,500	104
Total		26,200	25,100	26,200	104
WATERMELONS					
Florida	April-June	25,800	24,600	22,900	93
Texas	April-June	10,000	12,900	12,600	98
California	April-June	2,500	3,200	3,200	100
Total		38,300	40,700	38,700	95
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		100,060	96,100	96,200	97
United States		146,860	147,600	146,780	107

¹ Includes fresh market and processing.