

AeroGarden™

English

# COUNTY FAIR

VEGETABLE SERIES

*English, French & Spanish*  
**Tending & Harvesting Guide**

SEED KIT TYPE: \_\_\_\_\_

PLANTING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*This Seed Kit can only be used with AeroGarden Deluxe, PRO<sup>200</sup>, 6 Elite+, and 7-Pod models using the Deluxe Upgrade Kit.*



**This *Seed Kit* is only intended for use with AeroGarden models that can accommodate taller/heavier, full-size plants.**

This kit is meant to be used with the following models:

- AeroGarden Deluxe
- AeroGarden PRO<sup>200</sup>
- AeroGarden 6 Elite+
- Any 7-Pod AeroGarden using the Deluxe Upgrade Kit

### **Deluxe Trellis System**

For best results, we recommend using the AeroGarden *Deluxe Trellis System* accessory to support full-size plants.

If you are using an AeroGarden *Deluxe*, everything you need is included.

If you are using a *Deluxe Upgrade Kit*, PRO<sup>200</sup> or 6 Elite+ model, you will need to purchase the *Deluxe Trellis System* at [www.aerogrow.com](http://www.aerogrow.com) or by calling **1-800-476-9669**.

Using the *Deluxe Trellis System* will ensure that your plants receive the necessary support needed as they grow taller and produce an abundance of fruit.

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***AeroGarden Deluxe is pictured throughout this guide, but instructions apply to AeroGarden PRO<sup>200</sup>, AeroGarden 6 Elite+, and 7-Pod models using the Deluxe Upgrade Kit.***

**Quick Start Guides available at:  
[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**

# PLANTING YOUR GARDEN

A little bit of care for your Garden will ensure rapid growth and bountiful harvests. You will see sprouts in a few days. In a few months, you will experience the transformation of your seeds into delicious vegetables.

## Plant Your Garden

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Whether this is the first or fifth garden you are planting in your AeroGarden, you will need to reference your *Quick Start Guide*.

If you have planted a garden in your AeroGarden prior to this one, please refer to “*Replanting Your AeroGarden*” in the *Quick Start Guide* before you proceed.

If you no longer have your model’s *Quick Start Guide*, you can obtain the latest version of it at **[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**.

*Plant Spacers* are provided in all *County Fair Vegetable Seed Kits*. Using *Plant Spacers* ensures that each plant receives enough light and enough room to grow and produce fruit.

For **7-Pod models**, place one *Seed Pod* in front row, center opening and place remaining *Seed Pods* in back row, outer corner openings in *Grow Surface*. Put *Plant Spacers* in remaining *Grow Surface Openings*.

For AeroGarden 6 Elite+, see “*Plant Your Garden*” in *Quick Start Guide* for detailed instructions.

**NOTE: Vegetables need a daily dark period to produce flowers and fruit. If your Garden is in a place that receives any room light (natural or artificial), we recommend that you set your lights to be on during the day.**

# TENDING YOUR GARDEN

Please take a moment to review this section shortly after planting your Garden (see page 18 for *Reminders About Planting Your Garden*).

## Remove Domes

- A few days after planting your AeroGarden, tiny plants will appear through the holes in each *Seed Pod Label*. When this occurs, remove *Domes* from each *Seed Pod* with emerging plants and discard or recycle. Do not remove the *Label!*
- To reduce plant stress, we recommend removing *Domes* shortly after lights turn off or near the end of light cycle.
- Leave *Plant Spacers* in *Grow Surface Openings*. These inhibit algae growth by blocking light.



Each *Seed Pod Label* shows the number of days until seeds sprout.



*Don't let this happen!*

If your plant is curled inside the *Dome*, it was left on too long. *Immediately* remove *Dome*.

Never remove *Labels*. They promote germination, inhibit algae growth and identify your plants.

# Thin Plants

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- When your plants are about 1" (2.5cm) tall, check each *Seed Pod* for multiple plants. Using scissors, gently snip the smallest plants at the base of stem, leaving ONE healthy plant in each *Seed Pod*.



- Thinning seedlings ensures that the remaining plant in each *Seed Pod* will have room to grow, get enough nutrients, and produce many fruits.

- ! Be sure to cut, not pull, the extra seedlings to avoid damaging the roots of the remaining plant
- in each *Seed Pod*.

# Add Water

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**There should always be water in the Bowl of your AeroGarden.** For instructions, see the “Add Water Using a Spouted Container” section in your *Quick Start Guide*.

- Use room-temperature water. Very hot or very cold water will hurt your plants.

- ! • We recommend using municipal tap, bottled or purified water. Well or softened water **SHOULD NOT** be used because the extra minerals in these sources may be harmful to aeroponically grown plants.

## Feed Garden

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**Every 2 weeks you will need to add the contents of a nutrient bag to the Bowl.** For instructions, see “Add Nutrients” (*Feed Garden - Basic Feeding*) in the *Control Panel Features* section of your *Quick Start Guide*.



*Note: We recommend checking for bugs every time you add nutrients. See Troubleshooting on page 21 of this Guide for details.*

**Quick Start Guides available at:  
[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**

## Raise Lamp Hood (*Lights*)

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**As your plants begin to grow, you should provide 1-2” (2.5-5cm) of space between the top of plants and the lights.**

For instructions, refer to the “*Raise Lamp Hood (Lights)*” section in your *Quick Start Guide*.

If *Grow Bulbs* are too close to plants, leaves may brown and burn. If they are too far away, your plants will “stretch” toward the light and look unhealthy.

# Prune Plants

Pruning upright plants strengthens the main stem and helps plants branch out (rather than grow straight up). A strong plant with many branches will be able to bear the weight of many fruits without tipping over or breaking. Pruning also ensures that all plants get enough light for optimal growth.

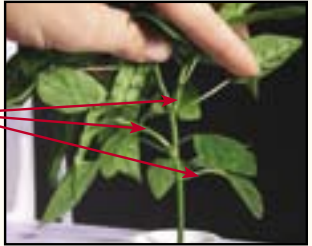
Refer to the **pepper**  for pepper-specific instructions; and **tomatoes**  for tomato-specific instructions.



## Young Plants

### Pruning 3-4 Week Old Pepper Plant

- When a pepper plant has 3 branches growing off of the main stem, it is time to prune the plant. This typically happens about 3 to 4 weeks after planting your Garden.



- Cut and remove the main stem of the pepper plant just above the 3<sup>rd</sup> branch.



Photo at right shows how your plant might look after pruning the main stem.



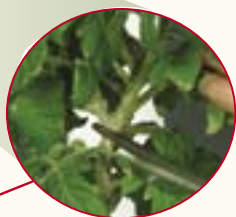
Pepper leaves are harmful if ingested. **Do Not Eat.**



## Pruning 4-5 Week Old Tomato Plant

About 4 to 5 weeks after planting your Garden, it is time to prune young tomato plants.

- From the base of plant, follow the main stem up past the first 5 branches.



- Cut the main stem just above the 5<sup>th</sup> branch.



*Photo at left shows how your plant should look after it has had its first pruning.*

- ! Skip this pruning if your Garden is older than 5 weeks and has flowers or considerably more growth than pictured above.

*Continued on next page*

# Prune Plants *(Continued)*

## Mature Plants (Ongoing Pruning)

To optimize the growth of your garden and ensure strong plants and bountiful harvests, you'll need to occasionally prune some branches from your plants.



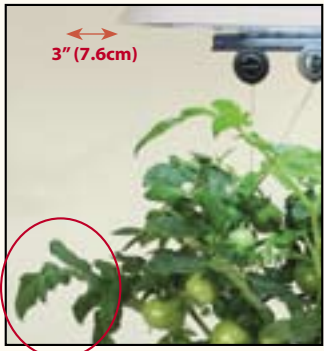
### Pruning Tomato Plant to Control Horizontal Spreading (Ongoing)

Prune tomato branches that are growing far outside the reach of the *Lamp Hood's* light.

The picture at right shows branches that need horizontal pruning. *The circled branch extends more than 3" (7.6cm) beyond outer edge of Lamp Hood and does not receive enough light to be productive.*

Use scissors to cut these longer branches. Make cut so that the branch is no more than 3" (7.6cm) beyond edge of *Lamp Hood*.

*Photo at right shows branch after pruning. Branch is now within 3" (7.6cm) of the Lamp Hood edge.*





### **Pruning Tomato Plant to Control Plant Height (Ongoing)**

Branches that touch lights when *Lamp Hood* is at the highest setting need to be pruned.

Use scissors to cut branches that are growing into lights. Follow branch to where it meets another branch – make cut just before this junction.



*Don't be discouraged if you end up cutting a branch with some flowers, or even a few small unripe tomatoes. Pruning strengthens plants and allows your Garden to put energy into growing branches that can support many tomatoes.*

### **Pruning Vining Plants such as Cucumbers and Zucchini (Ongoing)**

Many vining plants will produce too much leafy growth at the expense of fruit if they are not pruned. When the plant has six leaf sets on the main stem, remove the growing tip by pinching off or cutting with shears. This will encourage quick growth of side shoots and therefore fruit.

As plant begins to form fruit, remove young side branches one set of leaves beyond the forming fruit. This will encourage quicker fruit growth.

# Pollinate Plants

In nature, pollination is done by bees and the wind. Indoors, your fruiting plants depend on you to pollinate them.

You will need to start pollinating plants regularly once they begin to flower (approximately 4 to 6 weeks after planting, depending on plant type).

**1** Gently place an open hand near a flower cluster inside plant branches.

**2** Move your hand rapidly back and forth about 10 times to shake plant. *This will spread the pollen, though you will not be able to see it moving.*

**3** Pollinate your flowering plant at least every other day, and only when lights are on.



Tomato plant shown

**!** Hand pollinating is an important task. Fruiting plants will only grow from pollinated flowers.

*Special Note: Some people are allergic to the pollen in pepper flowers. If you think you may be sensitive to pepper pollen, we recommend using disposable gloves and a mask when pollinating your plants to avoid touching and/or inhaling the pollen.*

# Keep Your Garden Healthy

**Keeping a watchful eye on your Garden is not only a joy, but also a smart way to make sure your plants stay healthy.**

As your plants age you may see some brown or yellow leaves. This is perfectly normal.

- Remove these leaves with scissors or pinch off with fingers.
- Keep *Grow Surface* clear of dead leaves.



Tomato Plant



Pepper Plant

**!** Pepper leaves are harmful if ingested. **Do Not Eat.**



For tomato plants, remove dead, brown stems at the base with scissors. These older branches will not continue to produce fruit.

# Plant Problems & Remedies

**These pictures show plants that are stressed.**  
Follow suggestions to restore your Garden's health.



## **Wilted**

Garden is not getting enough water. Check water level.



## **Burned**

Plant is too close to *Grow Bulb(s)*. Raise the *Lamp Hood*.



## **Curled Inside *Dome***

*Dome* was left on too long. Immediately remove *Dome*.



## **Unpollinated Flower**

If you see flower blooms on your *Grow Surface*, your plant is not being pollinated sufficiently. Pollinate plants as described on page 11.

## Support Plants

As plants get larger they will need assistance to keep them upright and support heavy, fruit-laden branches.

When this occurs, support plants and bring them back to the upright position by securing each plant using the *AeroGarden Deluxe Trellis System*\*.

**\* Trellis Brackets must be attached to the Lamp Hood in order to use Deluxe Trellis System (see installation instructions provided with Deluxe Trellis System).**

Once *Trellis Brackets* are installed and *Trellis Coils* are attached to *Brackets*, you can begin attaching *Coils* to your plants.

- Hold plant up and pull *Trellis Coil* strap down far enough to loop it around plant stem.



- Loop strap around stem and snap shut.



*Continued on next page*

# *P*lant Problems & Remedies

(Continued)

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## Support Plants (Continued)

Photo shows properly attached Trellis Coil.



- ! As plants grow, you may find you need more than two (2) *Trellis Coils* (see below) to hold up the many fruit-laden branches. Additional *Trellis Coils* can be purchased at [www.aerogrow.com](http://www.aerogrow.com).



**Quick Start Guides available at:  
[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**

## Harvest Your Garden

**About 12-14 weeks after planting your Garden, you can begin harvesting your plants.**

Harvest your vegetables with pruning shears, household scissors, or by gently pinching off with fingers. Following the harvesting tips below will help keep your plants productive and healthy.



### Tomatoes

- A ripe tomato feels firm, but has a bit of “give” when pressed.
- Harvest tomatoes just before eating for a “sun-ripened” sweet flavor.
- Never Refrigerate Fresh Tomatoes! Cold temperatures make the flesh of a tomato pulpy and destroy the flavor.
- If tomatoes are still attached to a stem when harvested, they will continue to draw moisture and nutrients from stem several days after harvesting.

### Mega Cherry Tomatoes

#### Under Ripe



#### Ripening



#### Ripe



*Continued on next page*



## Peppers

A pepper is ready for picking when fully grown – 3-6" (7.6-15cm). Once your peppers are ripe, they start changing color – from green to red.

The longer bell peppers ripen, the sweeter they become. So, when you decide to harvest is purely a matter of personal taste preference.



**!** Pepper leaves are harmful if ingested. **Do Not Eat.**

## Vining Plants

Harvest young cucumbers and zucchini as soon as they have filled out and are the desired size. Keeping young fruits picked from the vines will actually cause your plants to continue producing fruit. If you wait until the fruit is overly ripe to harvest, the plant will stop producing fruit.

Remove fruit from the vine by holding the fruit in one hand and either pinching where the vine attaches to the fruit with your thumb to slip it free, or gently grasp the vine with the other hand and snap the vine where it attaches to the fruit. Be careful not to damage the rest of the vine.

# Reminders About Planting Your Garden

Please use the **Quick Start Guide** included in your original AeroGarden box for more detailed setup instructions. If you no longer have your *Quick Start Guide*, you can find the latest version of it at... [www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com).

## Setting up Your Garden

- 1 Is the *Lamp Arm* firmly inserted into the *Base*?
- 2 Are *Grow Bulbs* firmly inserted into *Lamp Hood*?
- 3 Is *Lamp Cord* plugged into *Lamp Hood*?
- 4 Is *Bowl* securely placed in *Base*?
- 5 Is there water in *Bowl* up to "Fill To Here"?
- 6 Is *Lamp Hood* at lowest setting?

## Planting Your Garden

- 7 Is there a *Seed Pod* or *Plant Spacer* in every *Grow Surface* opening?
- 8 Did you put a *Dome* on each *Seed Pod*?

- 9 Did you add *Starting Nutrient* tablet?
- 10 Did you record planting date on the cover of this Guide?

## Starting Your Garden

- 11 Did you plug in AeroGarden?
  - Are *Grow Bulbs* on?

## Replanting Your Garden (if this is not your first planting)

- 12 Did you reset the nutrient timer on your AeroGarden? (See "Replanting Your AeroGarden" in *Quick Start Guide*.)

# Questions & Answers—Lights

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## **Do I need to turn lights on and off manually?**

No. Your AeroGarden includes a built-in timer that turns lights on and off at specific intervals. These intervals are designed to maximize the growth of your vegetable plants. The timing system started as soon as you plugged in your AeroGarden.

## **Does it matter what time of day the lights go off?**

**Yes.** Vegetables require a daily dark period in order to produce flowers. We recommend setting your AeroGarden lights to be on during the day and off at night.

## **Can I change the time of day the lights go OFF?**

**Yes.** Consult the “*Personalize Your Light Timer*” section in your *Quick Start Guide* for instructions.

**Quick Start Guides available at:  
[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**

## Set Your Light Timer

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**Your AeroGarden has lights and a built-in timer that automatically provide your plants with the optimal amount of light needed to grow an abundance of delicious vegetables.**

Find instructions for setting the light timer in the “*Personalize Your Light Timer*” section of your *Quick Start Guide*.

**!** Keep in mind that vegetables need a daily dark period in order to produce flowers.

# Troubleshooting

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## **What do I do when a *Grow Bulb* burns out?**

Replacement bulbs can be ordered from your retailer or at [www.aerogrow.com](http://www.aerogrow.com).

## **What should I do if my *Grow Bulb(s)* aren't working?**

Make sure *Grow Bulbs* are firmly inserted in the *Lamp Hood*. Also check that your Garden is plugged into a working electrical outlet and the *Lamp Cord* is plugged into the *Lamp Hood*.

## **What if I want to move my Garden to another location?**

Go right ahead! Your AeroGarden has a built-in backup system that lets you unplug it without losing any of the settings.

To move your AeroGarden, be sure to pick it up by holding the *Lamp Arm* with one hand and sliding your other hand under the bottom of the *Base*.

## **My Garden doesn't look healthy. What can I do?**

If you are concerned about the health of your Garden, please go through the following...

- Keep lights as close to plants as possible, without leaves touching the *Grow Bulbs*.
- Replace *Grow Bulbs* every 6 months (see *Quick Start Guide* for model-specific instructions).
- Follow instructions on pages 3-17 of this guide.
- Don't use softened or well water.
- Continually harvest ripe tomatoes and peppers.

## **Why haven't my seeds sprouted a week after planting my Garden?**

Tomato and pepper seeds need temperatures above 60°F (15°C) to germinate (sprout) and temperatures between 70-80°F (21-26°C) are optimal. Perhaps you have placed your AeroGarden close to an air conditioning unit or a very cold window. Move your AeroGarden to a warmer location. The seeds should germinate within five days.

*Continued on next page*

## **Why do I have many flowers on my plant and not one fruit, weeks after planting my Garden?**

The flowers on your plant are not pollinated. Make sure to hand pollinate your flowers every other day, as described on page 11.

## **What if I see bugs?**

Occasionally, bugs might decide to visit your plants. You will mainly see aphids on tomato and pepper plants. They usually find their way into your home on clothing or cut flowers. They hide under leaves and in the joints between leaves and plant stems, so they can be difficult to see at first.

Initial signs that you have aphids are either your plants look unhealthy or you may see a sticky substance on your AeroGarden's *Grow Surface*. Spider mites look like tiny gray dots on the underside of leaves. Heavy infestation will leave noticeable webs on the tops of plants.

This is the easiest way we've found to get rid of bugs:

- 1 Prepare a solution of non-toxic insecticidal soap, available at most gardening stores – following manufacturer's directions.
- 2 Lightly spray plant leaves with soap and gently rub leaves between fingers to coat entire leaf.\*

*\* Be sure to rinse vegetables with water before eating.*

- 3 Check surrounding plants to make sure bugs haven't spread. If they have, follow the previous steps with any other buggy plants.
- 4 Repeat as directed on the bottle of insecticidal soap.
- 5 Keep a watchful eye on plants for the return of bugs and treat again, if necessary.

### **My plants are over 10 weeks old and have no flowers yet.**

There are several possible reasons for this.

1. *Not enough dark hours* – Fruiting plants require a daily dark period in order to produce flowers. If your plants will receive any room light during the day (natural or artificial), we recommend that you set your lights to be on during the day and off at night.
2. *Room Temperature* – Fruiting plants also prefer cool temperatures during this dark period. In order to maximize plant flowering, room temperatures should not exceed 90°F (32°C) during the day and 75°F (23°C) at night.
3. *Grow Bulbs* – *Grow Bulbs* in use for more than 6 months may not deliver sufficient light to plants. See *Quick Start Guide* for bulb replacement instructions. (*Purchase bulbs from your retailer or at [www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com).*)

### **How do I take care of my Garden when I go out of town?**

Add water to raise the level up to “*Fill To Here*.” A newly planted Garden with *Domes* removed may not need care for up to 2 weeks. However, if your Garden is mature and you will be out of town for several days, we recommend that you make arrangements for someone to care for your Garden while you are away.

### **What do I do when my Garden has completed its growth cycle?**

For step-by-step instructions regarding the care of your AeroGarden after plants have stopped growing, refer to the “*Prepare for your Next Garden*” section in your model’s *Quick Start Guide*.

# Replace Bulbs

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**Grow Bulbs** should be replaced after **6 months of use**. See “*Replace Grow Bulbs*” in your *Quick Start Guide* for replacement instructions.

*Purchase replacement bulbs from [www.aerogrow.com](http://www.aerogrow.com) or from your retailer.*

**Quick Start Guides available at:  
[www.aerogardensupport.com](http://www.aerogardensupport.com)**



The **AeroGarden**<sup>™</sup>

AeroGrow International, Inc.

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