



VEGETABLE SERIES

Tending & Harvesting Guide

SEED KIT TYPE: _____

PLANTING DATE: _____



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AeroGarden Classic is pictured throughout this guide, but instructions apply to all AeroGarden models.

**Quick Start Guides available at:
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

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

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

Consult the “*Plant Your Garden*” section in your *Quick Start Guide* for instructions and information on the optimal placement of *Seed Pods* and *Plant Spacers* in your AeroGarden’s *Grow Surface*.

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 light(s) to be on during the day. If the option is available to change the time your light(s) go off, instructions will be found in the, “Personalize Your Light Timer” section of the Quick Start Guide .*

TENDING YOUR GARDEN

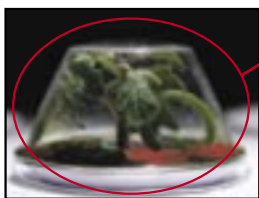
Please take a moment to review this section shortly after planting your Garden (see page 20 for *Reminders About Planting Your Garden*).

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 the *Domes* from each *Seed Pod* with emerging plants and discard or recycle. Do not remove the *Label*!
- To reduce plant stress, we recommend removing the *Domes* shortly after the light(s) turn off or near the end of the light cycle.
- For tomato and pepper plants, leave the *Plant Spacers* in the *Grow Surface*. 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

- 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

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

Every 2 weeks you will need to add one nutrient tablet (3-pod AeroGardens) or two nutrient tablets (6- or 7-pod AeroGardens) 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 23 of this Guide for details.

**Quick Start Guides available at:
www.aerogardensupport.com**

Raise Lamp Hood (*Light[s]*)

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

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

If *Grow Bulb(s)* 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.

Support Green Bean Plants

After thinning, put *Support Wires* in place. As plants mature, this open loop design will help your bean plants stay upright and bear the weight of many beans without breaking or tipping over.

- Twist the exposed ends of *Support Wire* with pliers to form a continuous loop.



- Bend the *Support Wire* into the shape shown. Once shaped, *Wire* should stand approximately 4" (10cm) tall.




- Secure *Support Wire* under *Seed Pod* by wedging the exposed wire end between underside of *Seed Pod* and *Grow Surface*.





- ! When positioning *Support Wire*, be careful not to scratch *Grow Surface*.

Prune Tomato & Pepper Plants

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

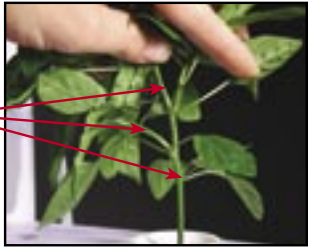
Refer to the **pepper**  for pepper-specific instructions;

tomatoes  for tomato-specific instructions; and

green beans  for green bean-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 3rd branch.



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





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 5th 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.

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Prune Tomato & Pepper Plants

(Continued)

Mature Plants (Ongoing Pruning)

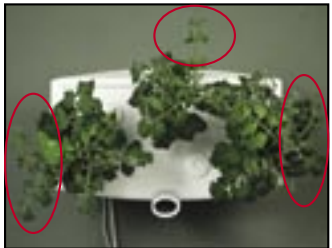
To optimize the growth of your Garden and ensure strong plants and bountiful harvests, you'll need to occasionally prune some branches from your plants.



Pruning Tomato Plant to Control Horizontal Spreading (Ongoing)

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

The picture at right shows a bird's eye view of plants that need pruning. *The circled branches extend more than 3" (7.5cm) beyond outer edge of Grow Surface and do not receive enough light to be productive.*



Use scissors to cut longer branches that hang over the edge of *Grow Surface*. Make cut so that the branch is no more than 3" (7.5cm) beyond edge of *Grow Surface*.



Photo at right shows the Garden after pruning. Branches are now within 3" (7.5cm) of the edge of Grow Surface.





Pruning Tomato Plant to Control Plant Height (Ongoing)

Branches that touch light(s) when *Lamp Hood* is at the highest setting need to be pruned.



Use scissors to cut branches that are growing into light(s). 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.

Photo at right shows the Garden after pruning. Branches are no longer growing into Lamp Hood.



Pollinate Tomato & Pepper Plants

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

You will need to start pollinating your plants regularly once they begin to flower (approximately 4 weeks after planting for tomatoes and about 5 weeks after planting for peppers).

- 1 Place an open hand gently 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 light(s) are on.



! Hand pollinating is an important task. Tomatoes and peppers 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 you use 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 your 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 from a *Vegetable Series Seed Kit* 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*.



Loose Pod Label

Occasionally, sprouting green beans will push *Labels* off of *Seed Pods*. Cut *Label* to remove from plant, and place *Label* back on *Seed Pod* to inhibit algae growth.



Unpollinated Flower

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



Curled Inside *Dome*

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



Support Tomato Plants

If you did not prune tomato plants as described earlier in this Guide, you may find plants are starting to tip over or even break due to the many tomatoes now growing and ripening on the vines.

When this occurs, support tomato plants and bring them back to the upright position by securing each plant to the *Lamp Arm* with a tie.

Suggested Materials to Use for Supporting Tomato Plants



The best way to support tomato plants is with *AeroGrow Soft-Ties*. *AeroGrow Soft-Ties* can be purchased at www.aerogardensupport.com or from your retailer.

There are a variety of other materials you can use to support your tomato plants. Some options are shown at right.



Ribbon, at least 1/4" (0.6cm), hook & loop tape, or old stockings will all work for securing your plant.



Do not use ties that will dig into (and damage) stem, such as string or wire. Also avoid materials that stretch, such as stretch ties sold in gardening shops, as these are not strong enough to support heavily laden tomato branches.

Continued on next page

Plant Problems & Remedies

(Continued)

How To Support Tomato Plants

Garden at right needs support.

The following steps explain how to support your plants.



- Loop a tie around main stem at a point where it:

- a) is strong enough not to bend or break when tie is secured, and
- b) stands upright when tie is pulled toward *Lamp Arm*.



- Tightly loop one end of tie around *Lamp Arm*. Hold tie in position with one hand. With other hand, gently pull opposite end of tie to bring main stem to an upright position.



Helpful Hint: The best way to figure out where to place the tie is to very gently push on the main stem with your fingers, testing for strength and ability to support the plant.

- Secure the two ends of tie to each other by twisting.



- If you notice other heavy branches that need additional support, secure them to the *Lamp Arm*, as well.



NOTE: You may need to prune plants after adding support ties (see page 9 of this Guide).

The photo at right shows the Garden after tie supports have been added.



- ! Loosen or untie supports before raising *Lamp Hood*, to avoid damaging plant stems.

Harvest Your Garden

About 6-8 weeks after planting your Garden, you can begin harvesting your green beans. Tomato and pepper plants need about 12-14 weeks before they are ready to harvest.

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.



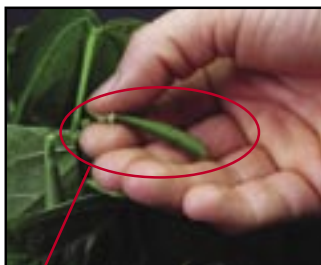
Green Beans

A green bean is ready for picking when it is about 3-4" (7.5-10cm) in length.

Pick green bean gently with your fingers:

- Hold green bean loosely in your palm.
- Grasp stem (slightly above green bean) between thumb and pointer finger.
- Snap stem between fingers. You can also use scissors to harvest green beans.

If green bean breaks during harvesting, take a moment to go back and snap the rest of it off. This will help keep your plant 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.
- If tomatoes are left on the stems, they will continue to draw moisture and nutrients from stems several days after they’ve been harvested.
- Never Refrigerate Fresh Tomatoes! Cold temperatures make the flesh of a tomato pulpy and destroy the flavor.

Red Heirloom Cherry Tomatoes

Under Ripe



Ripening



Ripe



Golden Harvest Cherry Tomatoes

Under Ripe

Ripening

Ripe

Continued on next page

Harvest Your Garden *(Continued)*



Peppers

A pepper is ready for picking when it is fully grown – 2-3" (5-7.5cm). Once your peppers are ripe, they start changing color. The longer peppers ripen, the hotter they become, so choose your desired level of heat by how ripe your peppers are when you harvest.

How Hot Are Your Peppers?

Capsaicin is the oil in chili peppers that makes them hot. Its concentration (measured in Scoville Units) increases as peppers ripen and can range from 0 in a sweet pepper to a fiery 300,000 in a habanero pepper.



Red Fire Peppers – 40,000 (green-unripe) to 50,000 (red-ripe)

Depending on the *Seed Kit* you have, AeroGarden peppers have Scoville ratings ranging from 2,500 for unripe peppers to 160,000 for ripe peppers.

Handling Peppers

- The oil in peppers can cause an unpleasant burning sensation to eyes and skin. When preparing peppers, try to limit your handling of oil contained in the inner flesh and seeds, and wear rubber gloves if possible.
- Keep some vinegar on hand to neutralize pepper oil if it comes in contact with skin.
- Avoid touching eyes and face until you have washed your hands thoroughly with soap.

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

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.

Setting up Your Garden

- 1 Is the *Lamp Arm* firmly inserted into the *Base*?
- 2 Are *Grow Bulb(s)* 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(s)?
- 10 Did you record planting date on the cover of this Guide?

Starting Your Garden

- 11 Did you plug in AeroGarden?
 - Are *Grow Bulb(s)* 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*.)

* If your AeroGarden has an *Air Hose*, connect it to the *Bowl* at this time.

Questions & Answers – Light(s)

Do I need to turn light(s) on and off manually?

No. Your AeroGarden includes a built-in timer that turns your light(s) 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 light(s) go off?

Yes. Vegetables require a daily dark period in order to produce flowers. We recommend that you set your AeroGarden light(s) to be on during the day and off at night.

Can I change the time of day the light(s) go OFF?

On select models – yes. If it is possible to change the time your light(s) go off, instructions will be found in the, “*Personalize Your Light Timer*” section in your *Quick Start Guide*.

Set Your Light Timer

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

If the option is available to set the light timer* on your AeroGarden, you will find instructions in the “*Personalize Your Light Timer*” section of your *Quick Start Guide*.

* *Not available on all AeroGarden models – consult Quick Start Guide – available at www.aerogardensupport.com.*

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

Troubleshooting

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

Replacement bulbs can be ordered from your retailer or at www.aerogardensupport.com.

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

Make sure *Grow Bulb(s)* 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! Keep in mind that each AeroGarden model has different features. Unplugging a Garden in the middle of its growth cycle could cause your AeroGarden's light timer to reset. *Before moving your AeroGarden, consult your Quick Start Guide to see how light timer is affected when your model is unplugged.*

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 light(s) as close to plants as possible, without leaves touching the *Grow Bulb(s)*.
- Replace *Grow Bulb(s)* every 6 months (see *Quick Start Guide* for model-specific instructions).
- Follow instructions on pages 6-19 of this guide.
- Don't use softened or well water.
- Continually harvest ripe tomatoes, peppers and green beans.

Continued on next page

Why haven't my tomato or pepper 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.

Why do I have many flowers on my tomato/pepper plant and not one tomato or pepper, weeks after planting my Garden?

The flowers on your tomato or pepper 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 and spider mites on green bean 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 above 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 tomato or pepper plants are over 10 weeks old and have no flowers yet.

There are several possible reasons for this.

1. *Not enough dark hours* – Tomato and pepper 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 light(s) to be on during the day and off at night.
2. *Room Temperature* – Tomato and pepper 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 Bulb(s)* – *Grow Bulb(s)* in use for more than 6 months may not deliver sufficient light to plants. See *Quick Start Guide* for bulb replacement instructions. (*Order bulbs from your retailer or at 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.

Continued on next page

Troubleshooting *(Continued)*

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 the *Quick Start Guide*.

**Quick Start Guides available at:
www.aerogardensupport.com**

Replace Bulb(s)

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

Replacement bulbs can be ordered from your retailer or at www.aerogardensupport.com.

z Gardening Notes



The **AeroGarden**[™]

AeroGrow International, Inc.

***Quick Start Guides* available at:
www.aerogardensupport.com**