





Whether you're growing carrots or kale, basil or borage, knowing when and how to harvest is essential for flavour, nutrition, and garden health. This guide offers practical advice for common UK crops and general tips to help you harvest anything with confidence and care.

General Signs It's Time to Harvest. Even if your crop isn't listed below, here are universal signs to look for:

- **Size & Shape:** Most vegetables are ready when they reach their expected size and shape. If they look like what you'd buy in a shop, they're likely ready. *(But don't be put off if yours don't look 'perfect'. They don't need to be to be just as tasty and nutritious, too much perfectly wonderful veg is thrown away by big companies for not being 'aesthetic' enough).*
- **Colour:** Vibrant, deep colours often signal ripeness. Pale or dull colours may mean it's too early.
- **Texture:** Firm but not hard is usually ideal. Overripe produce may feel soft or rubbery.
- **Smell:** Herbs and fruits often release a stronger aroma when ready.
- **Taste Test:** If unsure, pick one and taste it! That's often the best indicator.

Produce	Approx time to harvest after sowing	Harvest indicator
	20 - 24 weeks	Harvest flower buds when they reach full size but are still tightly closed.
	20 - 24 weeks	Glossy skin, full colour, firm to touch.



Beans (broad)

12 – 16 weeks

Pods are full but not bulging, beans inside are green and tender.

Beans (french)

10 – 12 weeks

Pods are slender, snap easily.

Beans (runner)

12 – 14 weeks

Pods 15-20cm long, snap easily.

Beetroot

10 – 12 weeks

Roots visible above soil, golf ball to tennis ball size.

Broccoli

14 – 20 weeks

Tight green heads, before yellow flowers appear.



Brussel sprouts

26 – 36 weeks

Firm, round sprouts about 2.5-4cm in diameter.



Butternut Squash

14 – 20 weeks

Skin is hard and tan-coloured, stem dries and browns.



Cabbage

28 – 36 weeks

Firm, dense heads, outer leaves begin to curl.



Carrot

10 – 12 weeks

Shoulders peeking 2cm above the soil



Cauliflower

20 – 26 weeks

Compact white heads, firm to touch.



Celeriac

26 – 30 weeks

Bulbs about 10cm across, firm and knobbly.



Celery

20 – 24 weeks

Stalks are thick, crisp, and upright.

Chillies

18 – 22 weeks

Full colour, firm skin, slightly soft to touch.

Courgette

8 – 10 weeks

10-15cm long, glossy skin, firm texture.

Cucumber

8 – 12 weeks

Firm, green, and full-sized.

Garlic

32 – 36 weeks

Lower leaves brown and dry, bulbs firm and papery.



Kale

20 – 24 weeks

Leaves are deep green and firm, pick lower leaves first.

Leeks

26 – 34 weeks

Thick white stems, about 2-3cm diameter.

Lettuce

6 – 8 weeks

Firm heads or vibrant outer leaves for cut-and-come-again.

Mange tout

10 – 12 weeks

Pods are flat, tender and snap easily.

Onion

24 – 28 weeks

Tops fall over and dry, bulbs firm and papery.

Pak choi

6 – 8 weeks

Leaves are crisp and upright, stems thick and juicy.



Parsnip

28 – 32 weeks

Roots are firm and about 20cm long.



Peas

12 – 14 weeks

Pods are plump but not hard; peas inside are sweet.



Peppers

18 – 22 weeks

Full colour, glossy skin, firm texture.



Potatoes

10 – 20 weeks

When flowers appear, gently dig and check size



Pumpkin

14 – 20 weeks

Skin is hard and deep orange; stem dries and browns.



Radish

4 – 6 weeks

Roots visible above soil, firm and round.



Rocket (wild)

4 – 6 weeks

Leaves are firm and peppery; harvest before flowering.



Shallot

20 – 24 weeks

Tops fall over and dry; bulbs firm and papery.



Spinach

6 – 8 weeks

Leaves are deep green and tender; harvest outer leaves.



Spring onions

8 – 10 weeks

Stems are pencil-thick and upright.



Swede

20 – 24 weeks

Roots are firm and about 10cm across.

Sweetcorn

14 – 18 weeks

Silks turn brown; kernels milky when pierced.

Swiss chard

8 – 10 weeks

Leaves are vibrant and stems thick; pick outer leaves.

Tomatoes

12 – 14 weeks

Fully coloured and slightly soft to touch.

Watercress

6 – 8 weeks

Leaves are dark green and tender; harvest tops regularly.