Vegetable Gardening

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. A seed packet says to direct sow. Where do the seeds go?
   - A. In the garden bed or container where the crop will grow
   - B. Into water for the full growing season
   - C. Into an indoor tray for transplanting after germination
   - D. Into a paper envelope until the crop is ready to harvest

   Correct answer: A. In the garden bed or container where the crop will grow
   Direct sowing puts seed in its final growing space. Starting seed indoors and moving the young plant outside is transplanting.

2. A packet describes pole beans as a climbing variety. Which item gives the stems a tall surface to climb?
   - A. A shallow saucer
   - B. A seed tray
   - C. A trellis
   - D. A row marker

   Correct answer: C. A trellis
   Pole beans can climb a vertical support such as a trellis. Bush beans have a different growth habit.

3. What feature lets excess water leave the bottom of a vegetable container?
   - A. An impermeable liner
   - B. Drainage holes
   - C. A tight-fitting solid base
   - D. A waterproof cap

   Correct answer: B. Drainage holes
   Drainage holes allow excess water to leave the container. Roots also need air in the growing medium.

4. A packet says to plant seeds 1 centimeter deep. What distance does that describe?
   - A. From the seed to the bottom of the container
   - B. Between neighboring seeds in the same row
   - C. Between the tops of two plants at maturity
   - D. From the soil surface down to the seed

   Correct answer: D. From the soil surface down to the seed
   Planting depth is the distance below the soil surface. Spacing between seeds or rows is a separate instruction.

5. A seedling has grown indoors in steady light and temperature. Which action is called hardening it off?

A. Removing all the lower roots
B. Gradually increasing its exposure to outdoor conditions
C. Planting it in compacted soil
D. Putting it in a dark room until it grows taller

Correct answer: B. Gradually increasing its exposure to outdoor conditions
Hardening off acclimates indoor seedlings to outdoor light, wind, and temperatures before transplanting.

6. Three radish seeds germinate next to each other. The packet specifies final spacing of 5 centimeters. What does it mean to thin the cluster?

A. Remove extra seedlings so the remaining plants have the intended spacing.
B. Add another seed beside each of the three seedlings.
C. Dig a shallower furrow for all three plants.
D. Cover the seedlings with an additional layer of soil.

Correct answer: A. Remove extra seedlings so the remaining plants have the intended spacing.
Thinning reduces crowding by removing some seedlings. The target spacing is for the plants left to grow.

7. One packet says peas can be sown in cool soil. A tomato seedling label says to wait until frost risk has passed. The soil is ready for peas and nights may still freeze. Which planting matches the labels?

A. Wait to plant peas until the tomatoes can go outside.
B. Set out tomatoes now and save the peas until midsummer.
C. Set out peas and tomatoes now because both are vegetables.
D. Sow peas now and keep the tomato seedlings protected.

Correct answer: D. Sow peas now and keep the tomato seedlings protected.
The stated pea conditions are met. The label for tomato seedlings calls for protection until frost risk has passed.

8. You have just sown small seeds in a tray. Which method wets the surface with the least risk of moving the seeds?

A. Empty a watering can onto one corner of the tray.
B. Pour quickly from a full bucket.
C. Use a gentle spray or fine rose.
D. Tip the tray upright under a strong stream.

Correct answer: C. Use a gentle spray or fine rose.
Small seeds can be washed out of position by a strong stream. A gentle spray wets the surface without as much disturbance.

9. A gardener uses a lightweight fabric cover to protect a crop during a brief cold spell. What is the cover’s role in this case?

A. It reduces heat loss around the crop compared with leaving it exposed.
B. It warms the roots by adding fertilizer to the soil.
C. It changes a warm-season crop into a frost-hardy variety.
D. It permanently removes the chance of later frost.

Correct answer: A. It reduces heat loss around the crop compared with leaving it exposed.
A row cover can reduce heat loss and supply some frost protection. The amount depends on the fabric and conditions.

10. A gardener wants batches of radishes to mature several weeks apart. Each sowing uses the same variety in similar conditions. Which schedule best supports that goal?

A. Sow all the seeds in adjacent rows on the same morning.
B. Sow all the seeds on one date and thin them at once.
C. Use more labels on one planting date.
D. Sow small batches on several dates.

Correct answer: D. Sow small batches on several dates.
Staggered sowing gives successive batches different start dates. Under similar growing conditions, that spreads their harvests.

11. Five lettuce starts go in one straight row with 20 centimeters between adjacent plants. How far apart are the centers of the first and last starts?

A. 60 centimeters
B. 100 centimeters
C. 80 centimeters
D. 120 centimeters

Correct answer: C. 80 centimeters
Five plant centers have four gaps. Four gaps of 20 centimeters span 80 centimeters.

12. Two identical pots hold the same crop and growing mix. One is in sun and wind, and the sheltered pot is still moist. The exposed pot’s mix is dry. What is the best next step?

A. Wait until the sheltered pot dries before watering either.
B. Water the dry pot and check each pot separately before the next watering.
C. Water both on the same fixed schedule regardless of moisture.
D. Move the dry container indoors and leave it unwatered.

Correct answer: B. Water the dry pot and check each pot separately before the next watering.
Sun and wind can make an exposed pot dry faster. Checking the mix in each pot lets you respond to the conditions each plant has.

13. Climbing peas share a bed with a short lettuce crop that needs sunlight. At this garden, afternoon shadows fall eastward. Where should the trellis go to keep its afternoon shadow off the lettuce?

A. Anywhere, since the direction of the shadow is irrelevant.
B. West of the lettuce, so its shadow reaches across the lettuce.
C. In the center of the lettuce row, with equal lettuce on both sides.
D. East of the lettuce, so the shadow falls farther east.

Correct answer: D. East of the lettuce, so the shadow falls farther east.
An eastward shadow from a trellis already east of the lettuce extends away from the crop. The layout uses this garden’s stated sun conditions.

14. A variety needs 50 days of growth before harvest. One bed will remain usable for 45 days and another for 60. Both beds meet all other needs. Which choice leaves time for harvest with ten days of margin?

A. Plant now in the bed with 60 days remaining.
B. Wait ten days, then plant in the bed with 60 days remaining.
C. Plant now in the bed with 45 days remaining.
D. Wait five days, then plant in the bed with 45 days remaining.

Correct answer: A. Plant now in the bed with 60 days remaining.
Fifty growing days plus ten days of margin require 60 days. Waiting cuts into that margin.

15. A gardener wants to see whether trellising affects the harvest from one climbing cucumber variety. Which comparison best isolates the effect of using a trellis?

A. Plant trellised cucumbers in spring and untrellised ones late in the season.
B. Compare a trellised cucumber with an untrellised bean.
C. Grow the same variety on the same schedule in two comparable plots, using a trellis in one.
D. Trellis the plants in full sun and compare them with untrellised plants in deep shade.

Correct answer: C. Grow the same variety on the same schedule in two comparable plots, using a trellis in one.
Matching the variety, timing, and plots reduces competing explanations. The deliberate difference is whether the plants have a trellis.