



Water chestnuts in late August



Water chestnuts ready to be harvested

- Water chestnuts are easy to grow in a container like a kiddie pool
- They need about 7 months to produce water chestnuts so need to be started inside in March
- Once they are planted outside in your container the only maintenance is to keep your container topped off with water



Harvested water chestnuts

Detailed information and instructions on growing water chestnuts can be found at <https://seedstl.org/tips-and-tricks/growing-water-chestnuts-in-st-louis/>

Starting Inside:

- Water chestnuts need 7 months to get a good crop so will need to be started inside in March
- Plant them in individual pots in potting mix, put the pots in a tray to hold water. Put the tray under grow lights just like you would any other seedling.
- The pots don't need to be in standing water, just be sure they don't dry out.

Choosing your outside container:

- We have found that kiddie pools work well but any container that holds water works.

Planting/Care:

- Fill your container with soil, a good garden mix is best.
- Plant at the same time as you would summer seedlings. Plant 2-3' apart. You don't need many for a container as they will spread to fill the container.
- Keep the container topped off with water so that it stays flooded.

Harvesting:

- In the fall the tops of the plants will start to turn straw-colored. Over several weeks they will continue to turn from green to straw-colored moving from the top down. This is normal and a good sign. It means the plant is putting the energy that's in the green tops down into the water chestnuts.
- Once the top couple of inches are straw-colored you no longer need to keep it flooded.
- Once the tops are mostly straw-colored, or a cold period down into the mid to low 20's is forecasted, it's time to harvest.
- Drain off the water. You can do this by digging a hole in the soil on the side of the container big enough for you to reach down to the bottom with a cup or bucket. Bail out the water. Continue to do this until all the water is drained from the container.
- Dig into the soil to get to the water chestnuts to harvest. If you grew in a kiddie pool or container like it, you may be able to lift up the mass of soil and roots to harvest the water chestnuts.

Storage:

- It's best not to wash the water chestnuts. The soil will help keep them wet and protected from drying out. Store them in a loosely closed plastic bag in your refrigerator, ideally in the crisper drawer. They can stay this way for months, even until it's time to start them again for the next year.
- When you are ready to eat them, just wash, peel and add them to your dish!