

Turmeric

Curcuma longa · Ginger family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Perennial rhizome, grown as an annual
MATURITY 8–10 months



SUN
Full sun to part shade



WATER
Regular and humid; dry off at harvest



SOIL PH
5.5–7.0



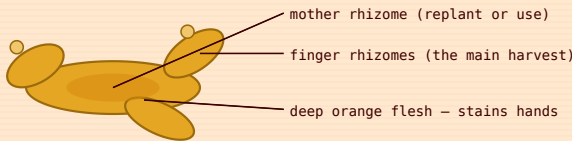
SPACING
30cm apart,
45cm between rows



DEPTH
5cm

01 Mother and fingers

The thick “mother” rhizome is where you planted, and the thinner “fingers” that branch from it are the main harvest. The flesh is a deep orange-yellow, and it stains hands, boards and clothes.



02 Planting

METHOD	Plant pieces of fresh rhizome with at least one or two buds, buds up, 5cm deep. Sprouting takes 4–8 weeks.
SOIL	Rich, loose, moist but free-draining soil with lots of compost. Raised beds and large pots work well.
TIMING	Plant from September to November once soil is warm. In cool zones, start it in pots under cover.
SOURCE	Buy untreated rhizomes from a nursery or organic grocer, since shop turmeric is often treated to stop sprouting.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Frost** — tender; leaves blacken and rhizomes rot in cold, wet soil, so grow in pots in cooler zones.
- **Rhizome rot** — rhizomes turn soft in waterlogged soil; use well-drained beds and do not overwater.
- **Leaf spot** — brown blotches on leaves in humid weather; improve airflow and water at soil level.
- **Root-knot nematodes** — galls on roots and stunted plants in sandy soil; rotate and add plenty of compost.

03 Growing care

- Keep soil evenly moist and mulch deeply through the warm months.
- Full sun suits it in humid areas, but give afternoon shade where summers are fierce.
- Feed monthly with compost or a balanced organic fertiliser through summer.
- Reduce watering as the leaves yellow and die back in autumn.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Leaves yellow and die back, usually 8–10 months after planting. Fresh young turmeric can be dug earlier.
METHOD	Loosen the soil with a fork, lift the clump and separate fingers from the mother. Save plump pieces to replant.
CURING	For dried turmeric, boil whole fingers for 30–45 minutes, slice and dry fully, then grind.
STORAGE	Fresh rhizomes keep 3–4 weeks in the fridge, or freeze for 6 months. Dried ground turmeric keeps 6–12 months, airtight and dark.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying turmeric slices for grinding to powder) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Ginger Chilli Banana	No strong known conflicts	Avoid replanting in the same spot for 2–3 years; the gingers share the same rot and nematode problems.