

## Words to Know

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**Biodiversity:** Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, category, or for the entire Earth. It is generally accepted that increasing biodiversity is favorable and promotes health and balance in the natural world.

**Citizen Science:** A project or ongoing program that engages volunteer community members over a large geographic area in addressing specific research questions. It is a partnership between the public and professional scientists to address a real world issue such as understanding and conserving biological diversity in food crops.

**Community garden:** A piece of land divided into small garden plots and gardened by members of a community. For specific examples see the American Community Gardening Association <http://www.communitygarden.org/>

**Ease/reliability:** If a variety is dependable, easy to grow, not overly vulnerable to pests or diseases, and one that you might recommend to a new gardener, it rates high in ease/reliability. If a crop is relatively difficult to grow or unpredictable, and you would hesitate to recommend it to a new gardener, it rates low in ease/reliability.

**Frost-Free Zone:** (Also called frost-free season, or growing season) The number of days between the average date of last frost in spring and average date of first frost in fall. Knowing the frost-free zone for one's particular area helps a gardener select crops and varieties that will be most suited to the area's climate .

**Open-ended question:** Encourage the respondent to provide a full, meaningful answer using his/her own knowledge and/or feelings. It is the opposite of a closed-ended question, which focuses on a short or single-word answer such as yes or no or some predefined category.

Open-ended question typically begin with words such as "Why" and "How", or phrases such as "Tell me about..."

**Probe Question:** A follow-up question used to clarify a response or gather additional information.

**Soil type:** Describes the physical composition of the soil, such as clayey, sandy, or loamy.

**Vegetable crop:** A broad descriptive category for vegetables, such as tomato or bean

**Vegetable type:** A subcategory of vegetable crop, type is a kind of crop, such as a *cherry* tomato or *bush* bean.

**Vegetable variety:** The most specific category used to identify a vegetable. *Sungold* cherry tomato and *Italian Rose* bush bean are examples of vegetable varieties. Many gardeners pay careful attention to the names of the vegetable varieties they grow because of successes or difficulties they've had in the past or personal preference for a particular taste or appearance.

**Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners website:** An online library of gardeners' ratings and reviews of over 5,000 vegetable and herb varieties that aims to help gardeners and researchers determine the success of specific vegetable varieties in relation to particular growing conditions by gathering gardeners' opinions.

**Vegetable Varieties Investigation (VVi):** A citizen science project partnering youth with gardeners to learn from each other and contribute vegetable varieties ratings and reviews to the Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners website.

**Yield:** As it refers to crop yield, the average amount of harvest produced by a given vegetable variety.