


In My Garden, Why Are My Onion Bulbs Small?

by Athena Hessong, Demand Media 



Several problems may cause small onions in your garden.

Onions (*Allium cepa*) are technically a biennial but are most often grown as annuals, since the entire plant is removed from the ground when the onions are harvested. Large, flavorful bulbs are the goal for growing onions for eating. If yours are too small even after a standard growing season, problems can range from competition in the soil to growing the wrong type of onion.

[Sponsored Link](#)

[How to Do It Yourself](#)

Search Videos & Articles to Find How to Do it Yourself - Free!

www.howtosimplified.com

Growing the Wrong Onion Type

The most likely cause of small onions is growing the wrong type of onion in your climate zone. Where you live determines the type of onions to plant. In U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 8 through 10, plant short-day onions. The bulbs will form when the plant has been exposed to the shorter daylight hours of the winter and spring, since they need only 10 to 12 hours to create large bulbs. Short-day onion seedlings are planted in the first half of January for

U. S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 9 through 11, or the second half of January to February 15 for USDA zone 8. Seeds for short-day onions go into the ground in the fall. Short-day onions are always grown from seedlings or seeds, but long-day and indeterminate onions are grown from sets or seedlings. Short-day onions include varieties like "Texas Super Sweet," "Texas White Sweet," "Sweet Red" and "Georgia Sweet." Long day and indeterminate onion varieties that should not be grown in USDA zones 8 through 10 include "Walla Walla Sweet," "Candy Onion," "Yellow Sweet Spanish" and "White Sweet Spanish."

Flowering Draws Energy From Bulbs

For large onion bulbs, your onion plant should not bolt and grow a flower. If this happens, you can do nothing to reverse it. The onion bulb remains edible, but it will be smaller than expected. This early flowering before the onion has been in the ground for is often caused by temperatures that swing from hot to cold. Larger transplants do not result in larger onions. Transplants thinner than a pencil thickness are less likely to bolt and more likely to grow large bulbs than larger transplants.