

Green Tips

Plant and Grow Guides

Cole Crops (GT 102)

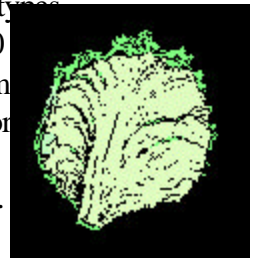
KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Grow in cool weather .spring and fall (with the exception of collards)
- Grow collards in either cool or warm weather
- Plant kale in the fall only
- Start cole crops from transplants for a spring garden
- Start from seed for a fall garden
- Fertilize, keep watered and do not cultivate too closely to the plants

Members of this family include cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, collards, kale and kohlrabi. There is now a broccoli-cauliflower cross called broccoflower. “Cole” is where the shredded cabbage salad gets its name, “cole slaw.” These vegetables grow best in cool weather. They can withstand frost and some even taste better afterwards. Grow these as a spring or fall crops. Most cole crops do not do well in hot weather.

COLE CROPS THAT PRODUCE HEADS

Cabbage-cabbage can be divided into two general categories: hard-heading and loose-heading. Their color can be dark green or white or red, which appears more of a reddish purple. Many types of cabbage grow from seeding to harvest in 60 - 100 days. The preferred way of growing cabbage is from transplants. These can be sold as early, midseason or late varieties. Cabbage has relatively smooth leaves except for Savoy cabbage which has crinkled leaves. There are also decorative cabbages that are used in flower gardens that add interest in the late fall. They have colored leaves, loose heads and ruffled leaves. They are also edible but are not especially tasty. Harvest cabbage when the heads are firm. If left too long, heads may split.



For more information and other helpful educational materials, contact:

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around the stem. Stems can vary from 2 - 4 feet in height. The lower Brussels sprouts on the stem mature first, with multiple harvests going up the stem. They are best grown as a fall crop and flavor will improve after a few light frosts. For larger sprouts, pinch out the growing point on the stem in mid September. Sprouts are ready for harvest when they are about two inches across. They are best grown from transplants.

Broccoli-after removing the central head of broccoli from the plant, do not pull the plant up. Side shoots of small heads will grow below on the stem after the central head is removed and will give another harvest of small heads. Harvest broccoli when the tiny buds in the head are dark green and about the size of match heads. Quality will be lost if the heads turn yellow and small flowerets open. Leave 6 - 8 inches of stem below the central head when harvesting.

Cauliflower-grows best as a fall crop. It is one of the most difficult vegetables to grow correctly. It is not for the novice gardener.

To produce a white head or "curd," pull the leaves over the head when it is the size of a tennis ball and tie loosely with a string or rubber band. This is called blanching.

Harvest in 1 - 3 weeks when heads are 6 -7 inches across. Heads turn greenish-brown without blanching and the flavor is negatively affected. Green and purple varieties do not need to be blanched.



A COLE CROP THAT A STEM

Kohlrabi-has a short growing season and best grown as a fall crop. Plant seeds every two weeks, from late June to the end of July, for a long harvest time. Harvest when the swollen stem, which is just above the ground, is still young and tender. It will be no larger than a baseball. Large stems are tough and woody.

COLE CROPS THAT ARE LOOSE-LEAF GREENS

Collards-collards resemble cabbage but have larger leaves and do not form a head. Unlike other cole crops, they tolerate heat well and can

be planted throughout the summer. They can also be started from transplants in the spring. Harvest the outer leaves when they are big enough to use or remove the entire plant when harvesting. Collard greens are traditionally prepared by cooking.

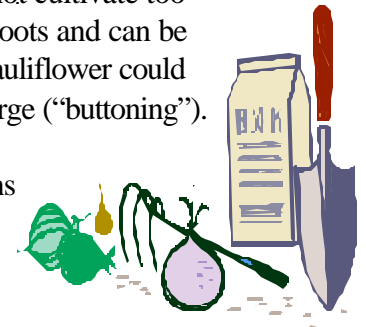
Kale-should be grown a cool weather crop in the fall. This is a non-heading cabbage. Harvest outer leaves or remove the entire plant when harvesting. The time to harvest is when the leaves are crisp, firm and bright green. New, small leaves are tender and can be added to salads. Older outer leaves are cooked. Old, overgrown kale is tough and stringy. The flavor of kale is improved by light frost. 'Bicolor' is an ornamental kale that is used in fall flower gardens. Because it lacks in flavor, is usually used as a garnish rather than food.

THE BASICS

Soil-cole crops do best with well-drained moist soils that contain high levels of organic matter.

Weed control-keep plants weeded. Do not cultivate too closely because cole crops have shallow roots and can be damaged. Damaging roots or leaves of cauliflower could cause a failure of developing heads to enlarge ("buttoning").

Fertilizer-follow soil test recommendations when putting transplants in the garden and use a high nitrogen fertilizer 4 - 6 weeks after transplanting. Cauliflower has higher fertilizer needs than other cole crops.



Transplants-many of the cole crops are grown from transplants rather than seed.