



Despite its impressive nutrient content, cabbage is often overlooked. While it may look a lot like lettuce, it actually belongs to the Brassica genus of vegetables, which includes broccoli, cauliflower and kale. This vegetable has been grown around the world for thousands of years and can be found in a variety of dishes, including sauerkraut, kimchi and coleslaw and comes in a variety of shapes and colors, including red, purple, white and green, and its leaves can be either crinkled or smooth.

How to Grow Cabbage

Planting

1. Seed outdoors as soon as weather and soil conditions permit.
2. Cover seed lightly with soil, 6 - 7 seeds per 30 cm (1 ft) of row.
3. Average garden soil and a sunny location are ideal.
4. Thin to 30 cm (1 ft) apart when 7 cm (3 in) high.
5. For earlier Cabbage start indoors 2 to 3 weeks in advance of intended date for moving the plants to the garden.
6. Germinates best at 21 C (70 F) in 7 to 10 days. Reduce temperature after germination to 15 C (65 F) and provide additional light to help prevent stretching and to tone up plants before transplanting outside.
7. Keep well watered during hot temperatures to avoid bolting.

Cabbage is a hardy, leafy vegetable full of vitamins. It can be difficult to grow; it only likes cool temperatures and it can be a magnet for some types of garden pests. Here are some tips for growing cabbage in your garden!

Harden off plants over the course of a week before planting them outside. To prepare soil, till in aged manure or compost.

Plant 12 to 24 inches apart in rows, depending on size of head desired. The closer you plant, the smaller the heads.

Mulch thickly to retain moisture and regulate soil temperature.

Fertilize 3 weeks after transplanting with a high Nitrogen fertilizer.



Diseases & Pests

Cabbageworms:

Dill protects all members of the cabbage family by attracting beneficial wasps that kill cabbage worms and other pests.

Aphids:

Try spraying cold water on the leaves; sometimes all aphids need is a cool blast to dislodge them. If you have a large aphid invasion, dust plants with flour. It constipates the pests.

Diatomaceous earth is a non-toxic, organic material that will kill aphids. Do not apply DE when plants are in bloom; it is harmful to pollinators, too.

End-All Organic Spray Derived from Chrysanthemum roots will work on Aphids as well as mites, thrips, spittle bugs, flea beetles, caterpillars, mealybugs, scale insects and whiteflies at all stages.

Cabbage Root Maggots:

Sticky traps in the garden are effective at trapping cabbage flies. They are available at most nurseries.

You can try installing 'cabbage collars' at the base of the stem. These can be made from cardboard and will simply be a skirt around the base of the plant. It protects the plants from egg laying. Most red cabbage varieties have some resistance to cabbage root maggots.

If you'd like to keep cabbage root maggots away from more valuable plants, try planting radish as a trap. Many maggots will be attracted to the radish, and then you can destroy it.

Companion Planting

Beans, Celery, Cucumbers, Dill, Kale, Lettuce, Onions, Potatoes, Sage, Spinach, Thyme

Because cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower are closely related, and require similar nutrients, it's best not to plant them together. They are all heavy feeders, depleting the soil faster of required nutrients; plus, they will attract the same pests and diseases. Also avoid Strawberries and Tomatoes.

To get two crops from early cabbage plants, cut the cabbage head out of the plant, leaving the outer leaves and root in the garden. The plant will send up new heads—pinch them off until only four or so smaller heads remain. When these grow to tennis-ball size, they'll be perfect for salad.