

Time to Plant These Fall Vegetables

Cole Crops: Brussels Sprouts, Broccoli and Swiss Chard

By Grace Emery

Brussels Sprouts

Brassica oleracea gemmifera

Key Facts:

Description: Group of cabbages, grown for edible buds

Planting dates: transplants (preferred) - August 20 to

September 10, seeds - 6 weeks earlier

Spread out planting dates so you can harvest for

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays

Plant 1 to 2 plants per family member



Photo by Grace Emery

Days to harvest: 80 to 90 days

Soil: Heavy soil is much better than sandy soil.

Planting:

- Brussels Sprouts like 60-65 degree weather; they turn bitter in temps over 80 degrees.
- They like fertile compost-rich soil, well drained; add 6 inches of compost to the planting area.
- Cole crops like Brussels Sprouts are best in full sun locations.
- Space 14 to 18 inches apart, in rows 30 inches apart (these plants grow more upright).
- Be sure the transplant is moist before planting. Water the hole after you add fertilizer and pat soil down well around the transplant so it is firm in the ground.
- Water the sprouts well.
- Always rotate this crop every two years.
- Disease and pest control by following the [Easy Gardening Insect Control by Aggie Horticulture](#).

Sprouts appear on the main stem between leaves, starting at the bottom first, growing to about 1 inch. Be sure to cut off the lower leaves if they turn yellow.

Cole crops are a good source of protein, minerals and vitamins.

Brussels Sprouts have long been popular in Belgium and Denmark; however, they originated in Rome and were considered the most popular vegetable in the 16th century.

Green Magic Broccoli

Brassica oleracea var italica

Key Facts:

Planting dates: transplants (preferred) Sept 1- October 15,
seeds 6 to 8 weeks before

Days to harvest: 60

Soil: Sandy, slightly acidic soil

Zone Hardiness 9, survived our 151 hours of freeze



Photo by Grace Emery

Planting:

- Amend the soil with 2 inches of compost; put fertilizer in the bottom of hole and wet the plant and hole before inserting.
- If you started seeds indoors, plant your transplants when they are 4 to 6 weeks old (and have 4 or 5 leaves) 12 to 20 inches apart, in holes slightly deeper than their container depth. For transplants from a nursery, follow the same directions.
- Space rows of broccoli 3 feet apart. (Closer spacing yields smaller main heads but more secondary heads.)
- If you see yellow petals, harvest immediately, as the quality will decrease rapidly.
- Disease and pest control by following the [Easy Gardening Insect Control by Aggie Horticulture](#)

Harvesting: Harvest broccoli in the morning, when the buds of the head are firm and tight, just before they flower. Cut heads from the plant, taking at least 6 inches of stem. Make a slanted cut on the stalk to allow water to slide away. (Water can pool and rot the center of a flat-cut stalk, ruining the secondary heads.)

Broccoli takes a long time to mature, so be patient! After you harvest the main head of a broccoli plant, (when it is about the size of your fist), it will often keep producing smaller side shoots that can be enjoyed for months to come.

Broccoli is a sun loving plant, cool-season crop and extremely nutritional. It's also incredibly good for you. Broccoli is worth growing for its nutritional content alone. This cole crop is rich in vitamins and minerals, and is a good source of Vitamin A, potassium, folic acid, iron, and fiber.

Swiss Chard

Beta vulgaris, Cicla, group/Flavescens group

Key facts:

Description: Green Leafy Vegetable

Planting dates: transplants August 30 to September 30,
seeds 6 to 8 weeks earlier

Days to harvest: 30 days for baby leaves; 45-60 days for full
sized, thick rib

Soil: Well drained soil with lots of organic matter



Photo by Grace Emery

Planting

- Direct seeding: Plant seed in a row about ½ inch deep, in soil that has been loosened with a hoe with 2 inches of compost added with fertilizer under the row. When the plants are about 4 inches high, thin to 8 inches apart.
- Transplants should be well watered before planting. Also water the hole after adding fertilizer.
- Rows should be 18 inches apart.
- Water about 1 inch a week.
- Chard is generally easy to grow, so you might do succession planting so you have a continuous supply.
- Disease and pest control by following the [Easy Gardening Insect Control by Aggie Horticulture](#).

Greens include the leafy vegetables; they are often called potherbs. They prefer well drained soil and full sunlight but will tolerate partial sun too. Chard is a biennial, growing two years before producing a seed. Seeds can be planted and harvesting of young tender leaves is most desirable. They can be continuously harvested though the season. Raw Chard is very perishable, so refrigerate after harvesting.

- Chard is rich in vitamins A, K, D, E and magnesium, iron and potassium.

Sources of information:

Wikipedia

BCMG website

Easy Vegetable Gardening, Cole Crops and Spinach and other Greens

Aggie horticulture vegetable files

Fall Vegetable Varieties