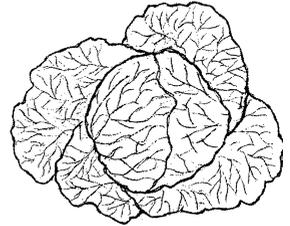




Cultivating vegetables

- Cabbage -

Cabbage is a popular vegetable with gardeners. It is very nutritious and easy to grow and can be planted on a wide range of soils and in areas differing considerably with regard to climate.



When to plant

Climate	Ideal times	Possible times
Cool	Dec–Feb; Sept–Oct	Aug–Feb
Warm	Jan–March; Aug–Sept	All year round
Hot	Feb–Apr; July–Aug	Feb–Aug

- Cabbage is best grown under cool, moist conditions. Avoid the very hot or very cold months.
- It can withstand low as well as fairly high temperatures, but select the correct cultivar for the time of year, e.g. Hercules which is fairly tolerant to heat.
- However, cabbages that reach maturity during the hottest months of the year tend to give a lower yield and are more often attacked by pests and diseases.
- Cabbage is fairly frost resistant, but grows slowly in cold winters, and may be damaged by severe frost.



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Where to plant

Cabbage can be planted on a wide range of soils varying from sands to heavy clays, provided they are well drained.

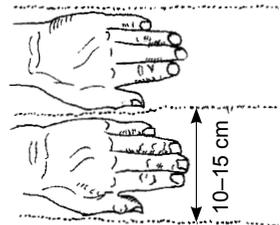
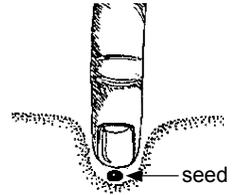
The best soil for this plant is well-fertilised, medium to heavy loams which are well drained to a depth of 600 mm or more.

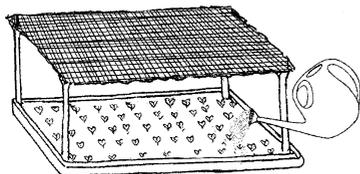
Soil preparation

- Cabbage can be grown in most soil types but it thrives in types that are rich in organic matter and are not very sandy.
- It is very important to prepare the soil deep and thoroughly.
- Work in as much organic material such as compost, manure or plant residue of previous crops as possible. This must be done at least two weeks to two months before planting.
- Adding 2:3:4 (30) fertiliser will give an even better yield.

Sowing seeds

- Cabbage seed should be sown in seedbeds or seedboxes and transplanted later.
- Make small furrows 1 cm deep and 15 cm apart.
- Sow the seed 1 cm apart in the furrow, cover with soil and firm down the soil.
- Too thick stands of seedlings will cause the plants to develop long, thin stems and encourage disease.
- Water well immediately and then once or twice a day for one week. Gradually decrease this to once or twice a week when the plants are ready to be transplanted (five or six weeks).
- Use a watering can with a fine spray nozzle.
- If it is very hot, provide partial shade with mulch, a grass roof or shade net. Too much shade, however, can cause the plants to be weak.





Remove the shade net gradually over a number of days just before transplanting the seedlings.

Transplanting

- In warmer areas plants can be transplanted four to five weeks after sowing, in colder areas up to two weeks later.
- The plants should be about 10 cm high.
- Water the plants well before transplanting them.
- Lift the plants with a small spade making sure that the roots stay covered with soil.
- Plant them 40 cm apart in rows which are 60 cm apart.
- Do not transplant weak seedlings or those with damaged growth tips.
- Set the plants a little deeper in the soil than they were in the seedbed, but make sure that you do not cover the growth point with soil.
- Firm down the soil and water the plants well.



Caring for the plants

- Give enough water to obtain a good yield. However, too much watering when the heads are firm could cause them to split.
- A mulch will help to conserve water.
- The moisture needs of the plants will depend on, for example, the time of year, the climate and the type of soil.
- Heavy soils will need heavy watering less often while sandy soils will need more frequent light watering.
- If available apply LAN fertiliser four to six weeks after transplanting.
- The soil between the rows must be tilled regularly with a hoe because the plants need air in the soil to grow fast and thrive. Shallow hoeing is necessary or else the cabbage roots could be damaged.

Harvesting

- Generally the heads are cut when they are firm. This is about 3 months after planting or later in cooler conditions.
- In the home garden, however, they can be cut from 10 to 14 days before this stage.
- Cut the heads with two or three outer leaves for protection during transporting.
- Remove the stumps afterwards and add to the compost heap.
- If you want to store the cabbages, choose a cool, dry area.

For further information contact your nearest extension officer.

Acknowledgement

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