

Example Packets



What you will need

- Johnsons seeds
- Seed trays or pots
- Compost
- Grow bags or large pots
- Support such as tall canes



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A quick guide to



Hints and Tips

- Brassica crops are best fed with a slow release fertiliser, using fertilisers that release their nutrients quickly can cause plant growth to be uneven.
- Do not allow broccoli or calabrese heads to flower. As soon as the florets show colour the flavour will be lost and they will stop developing more new shoots.



- Brussels sprouts should be harvested from the bottom of the plant upwards. Don't wait until Christmas, start picking when the sprouts are still young, extra tender and tasty.



- Cauliflower leaves can be twisted back over the curds as they develop, to protect them from sunlight which can cause them to discolour. It will also help protect winter varieties from biting winds

and the worst of the frost.

- The attractive leaves of Kale make it an ideal vegetable to grow in flower beds if space is limited. Mature kale leaves are sweetened and improved by exposure to frosts.
- In exposed, windy locations winter crops benefit from the shelter of a wind break.
- For the crispest, freshest crops brassicas should be harvested early in the morning during the summer months, or around midday in frosty winter weather.



Recipes

Cabbage Recipe:

Shred cabbage and place in a pan with diced onion and pre-cooked smoked sausage. Combine a mix of beef stock, apple juice and mustard and pour over cabbage. Bring to the boil and reduce heat to simmer until vegetables are tender. Quick and tasty.

Gourmet Broccoli Recipe:

Boil broccoli spears in a pan for a few minutes to blanch. Set aside. Heat oil in a pan, add crushed garlic and a little paprika. Add broccoli, fried bacon lardons and some finely chopped anchovy fillets. Stir together and cook until tender, then serve.

Kale and Vegetable Pasta Recipe:

Heat a little olive oil in a pan and sauté diced red and yellow peppers, kale and garlic. Season with a little cayenne pepper and salt. Cook until vegetables are tender. Stir vegetables through cooked pasta, penne or farfalle and serve with crumbled cheese.



Brassicas are one of the most varied and popular groups of vegetables containing many varieties such as cabbages and kale as well as calabrese, sprouting broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflowers and many more. With a little bit of planning they are easy to grow and extremely worthwhile. One of the keys to success is the rotation of brassica crops, which means moving them to a different part of the vegetable plot every year for a period of at least three years before they are moved back to their starting point. Growing the same vegetables continuously in the same place can lead to problems with a build up of soil borne diseases, despite the significant advances in the breeding of disease resistant and disease tolerant varieties. It is also important to protect brassicas from hungry birds and caterpillars, this is easily done with the use of horticultural fleece or fine netting.



Types of Brassicas

Brussels sprouts are usually sown in early spring so they can be harvested in late autumn and over the winter months. Sprouts are a very useful winter crop, they are very nutritious and a traditional Christmas dinner favourite. There are many varieties available to try, many with a subtly different flavour.



Broccoli and Calabrese can be surprisingly heavy cropping if the heads are cut regularly. Calabrese forms large, dark green domed heads with many florets coming together from one thick stem. Broccoli tends to produce many looser, smaller heads on slender

stems. The florets are usually purple, sometimes white in colour. Once the main heads have been cut both types will keep producing side shoots that can also be harvested.

Cabbages are often divided into a number of groups: Varieties usually sown in summer for crops the following spring are known as spring cabbages, when mature they tend to have conical heads. They are also harvested as young, loose leaved spring greens. Varieties sown in early to late spring under glass to produce late summer and autumn crops are usually known as summer cabbages, the earlier they are sown, the earlier in summer they can be harvested. Summer cabbages are often round ball headed varieties. Winter cabbages also tend to be ball head varieties, sown in spring they are hardy enough to be harvested from late autumn through the winter and into spring. Other familiar types of cabbages are savoy cabbages with their typically wrinkly leaves, they tend to be grown as winter cabbages and have an excellent

Brassicas



long harvest season. The popular and colourful red cabbages are often grown as summer cabbages and give a wonderful contrast to the more usual green varieties. **Cauliflower** heads are known as curds because of their lumpy appearance, although they are most often white they are available



in a remarkable range of colours, shapes and sizes that are rarely found in the shops. The different colours look great on the plate and also provide tantalising differences in flavour. Cauliflowers can be



grown for summer, autumn and winter crops. They can be sensitive to weather and temperature but an easy solution to ensure good

crops is to make several sowings throughout the sowing season so that some batches are guaranteed to have the best conditions at the appropriate stages of growth.

Kale is a wonderfully easy to grow vegetable that is most enjoyed for its versatility and flavour. The mature leaves can be used as cabbage and tender young leaves used as spinach, or baby leaves used raw in salads. The use of leaves at different stages of growth gives a very useful, long harvest season, from early summer right through winter and into spring.

Where

Many members of the brassica family can easily be sown directly into prepared soil in their growing position when the soil is warm enough. Most varieties can also be sown indoors, this is normally recommended to give an earlier start to the growing season or for more expensive varieties when there may be fewer seeds in a packet.

How

When sowing indoors make certain the pots or trays are clean and be sure to use fresh seed compost.

To aid germination the trays should be kept at approx. 13°C and covered with glass, polythene or a propagator lid to help keep the compost moist. Remove the cover when seedlings appear. Outdoor sowings should be made into soil that has plenty of organic matter dug in to provide nutrients and help retain moisture. Don't forget to use your free Johnsons seed label to identify the variety sown.



Care

Once seedlings sown outdoors are large enough to handle they need to be thinned out, removing the weaker seedlings and leaving the stronger ones the room they need to grow on. The soil needs to be kept moist (but not wet) and weed free. Seedlings raised indoors can be planted out when they are large enough. Before planting out young plants must be acclimatised to outside conditions by being placed outdoors in a sheltered location for a few hours during the day, the time spent outside should gradually be increased over the next two weeks (avoid frosts). They can then be planted out to their final growing position at the spacing

indicated on the packet. Always hold seedlings by a leaf so you don't risk crushing the stem.

Harvesting

The large number of different types of brassicas means there can be crops available to harvest for most of the year. They can also be harvested at different stages of maturity, for example many cabbages can be harvested when young as greens or when they are mature and the heads have formed. Please see the back of the seed packet for more specific growing instructions.

