



COLLARDS (*brassica oleracea*)



Full Sun



Part Shade

Collards and their cultivation

An important perennial vegetable in southern gardens, collard is extremely resistant to warm as well as cool temperatures. Easily cultivated and highly esteemed for its flavor, this member of the Cabbage family is of major importance in the South, where, by its hardy constitution, it can stand summer heat and winter cold.

Collards a Southern Favorite

Collards have been described as a nonheading cabbage, resembling the tall kales in growth. Since it will stand more heat than cabbage, it is substituted for that crop in warm regions of the country. In the North where heading cabbage is successfully grown, collards have not become popular.

The Culture of Collard Plants

In general, the culture of collard and that of cabbage is similar. In the South, sowing is usually done in both the spring and the fall. In the North, collard may be planted in the summer for late greens.

Planting

Some believe it to be improved by the first frosts. Plants may be started early in the spring and set out later in the same way as cabbage, or they may be sown in the garden row and later thinned to stand about two feet apart, with three feet between the rows. Seedlings may be thinned to stand six inches apart if the crop is to be used while plants are still small.

Soil

A good fertile soil will produce a more desirable growth. High quality relies on quick growth, and generous applications of rotted manure or compost are important. The soil should be worked into good filth before planting.

Light and maintenance

Collards require full sun, and although they can withstand more drought than the cabbage, ample moisture should be supplied. No weeds should be allowed to establish themselves, so cultivation is necessary. Shallow cultivation is best to prevent cutting roots close to the surface. The hoe should be put into action about once a week until the plants are half grown, after which the shade of the plants will help to keep down the weeds.

Harvesting Collard Greens

Whole young collard plants may be cut or the tender leaves at the top stripped off. A cluster of leaves may be picked a few at a time as required and before they mature so as not to be tough. As the plants are gradually stripped of their lower leaves, they may need the assistance of a stake to support the top cluster.

Disease and Pest Control

Collard plants should be carefully examined for signs of wilting or curling of the leaves. Damping-off is a disease which causes the soft part of the stem to rot away between the main root and the surface of the soil. The diseased plant should be pulled up and destroyed.

Cabbage worms can be thwarted with homemade sprays. A mixture of ground pepper pods, water and 1/2 teaspoon of soap powder will work effectively against the worms when sprayed on the plants. Protective shields of mesh wire and a cylinder of hoops can be erected to prevent damage to growing collards.

Nutrient Value

Collards are high in vitamins A and C.

Varieties of Collard

Georgia collards are hardy and endure adverse conditions, including poor soil. It grows 30 or more inches in height and bears a loose cluster of large, cabbagelike leaves.

Louisiana Sweet has compact centers and short-stemmed leaves. Cabbage collard is more resistant to warm weather and forms small, cabbagelike heads. Vates collard is widely adaptable and is hardy in the North.