

TURNIP (*Brassica rapa*)



Full Sun



Part
Shade



Turnip growing

Turnips are treated in the home garden much the same as any other underground garden crop. One of the secrets of their good flavor is rapid growth, for which a good soil with a heavy supply of organic matter and phosphate rock is essential.

Turnips require a sweet soil

A loose, friable soil will prove most satisfactory for raising this short-season crop. Mulching the garden with grass clippings, hay and other organic mulches will further benefit turnips.

If the soil is on the acid side, it is well to apply lime at the rate of 1/2 to one pound to each ten square feet.

Planting and culture of Turnips

Turnips can be planted as a spring crop, but must be put in as soon as the soil is workable so they can be harvested before hot weather. More often they are planted in fall.

Seed for late turnips should be sown during the latter part of July or early in August. Never cover turnip seed with more than 1/4 inch of soil as they are very small and the tender young plants are easily killed when there is a thick layer of soil on top.

The seed is sown in rows spaced 12 to 15 inches apart. These late plants, left in the garden all winter, will bloom and set seed the following spring.

Harvesting Turnips

Although rapid growth is needed for this crop, it bears watching. The turnips should not be allowed to grow too large or they will become woody and stringy and will be bitter tasting. If intended for storage, turnips should be dug before the first light frost. In the case of a mild winter, they can be left in the ground until after Thanksgiving Day.

After pulling up, turnips should then be topped and stored in the basement. The Swede or rutabaga turnip is generally conceded to be the best variety for winter storage. If yellow turnips are preferred, plant American Purple Top.

Turnips should be harvested before they have grown too large and developed woody, bitter-tasting flesh.

Varieties of Turnips

The types and varieties are many and take on various sizes and shapes. Some are flat, some are round, others are cylindrical. When grown under the same

conditions, though, they all taste practically the same.

Included among the more common varieties are the Extra Early Purple Top, Golden Ball, Large White and Large Yellow Globes, Snowball, White Egg, Red Top Globe, and Early Purple-Top Milan. Tokyo Cross is an early variety (35 days) which is valued for its resistance to virus and other diseases.