



SUSTAINABLE HOLLY

PLANT OF THE MONTH

BROCCOLI

JULY 2021

BROCCOLI

Brassica oleracea

Broccoli (*Brassica oleracea*) is a hearty winter vegetable that provides large yields of nutritious food that can be used in so many ways! Growing your own Broccoli at home not only means you will have nutrient-rich veggies but, you will also get access to all the extra parts of the plant such as the leaves and the stem that are both edible and delicious. Broccoli is easy to grow and can be grown in containers or garden beds.

How to grow

Broccoli likes cool temperatures and a full sun location. Plant your Broccoli in a different area of the garden each year to help the soil replenish the nutrients. Broccoli grows best in rich, moist soil with a pH between 6.0 - 7.

Plant your seedlings about 40- 50cm apart in compost-rich soil. Add a layer of mulch to keep the soil protected and moisture in.

Varieties

De Cicco - Traditional Italian Broccoli.

Waltham - A popular Farmers' Market variety, forms large heads.

Green Sprouting Broccoli - blue-green head is followed by 'broccolini type' side shoots.

Purple Sprouting Broccoli - Green stalks with small - medium sized purple heads.

Romanesco - Large pale green heads with an attractive spiralling pattern.

Kailaan - Long succulent stems topped with compact broccoli head

Climate

Broccoli grows best in Autumn and Winter. It can bolt in warm weather. Some varieties can be grown all year round.

Care / maintenance

Keep the plants well-watered on warm days. Feed with liquid Seaweed fertilizer or compost tea every few weeks.

Pests

Broccoli is a target for white butterflies and caterpillars. Check your plants regularly by lifting the leaves and checking for caterpillars or larvae and remove.

Use crushed eggshells or a small container of beer to help keep the slugs and snails away especially while the plants are young and delicate.

Reproduce

Broccoli seeds can be saved after letting one of the Broccoli florets go to flower and seed. Yellow flowers will appear and then after that, seed pods will form.

Once they have dried off you can harvest all the seed pods. Save the seeds and keep them in a cool, dry, dark space.



Harvesting

Depending on the variety Broccoli will be ready to harvest in 50-80days. The Broccoli head should have tightly packed buds and not have started going to flower.

Once the little buds start going to flower you will want to harvest ASAP as the flowers will be quite bitter in flavour.

To harvest your Broccoli cut the stem on a slight angle using a sharp knife. This will allow more broccoli heads to sprout off the main trunk over the next few weeks and you will get extra Broccoli!

Cooking

Broccoli is such a hearty vegetable and can provide nutritious and filling meals. Broccoli can be used in so many ways such as raw in a salad, roasted, grilled, steamed, stirfried, and added to any curry or soup.

The Broccoli heads, stem and leaves can all be used.

Preserving your harvest

Broccoli can be frozen to add to soups and stocks. To prepare the Broccoli, rinse and remove the stalks. The stalks will take longer to cook so I like to freeze them separately.

Blanch the Broccoli in boiling water for 40 seconds - 1minute then add to a bowl of iced water. Cut the stalks into slices or cubes and blanch for 2 minutes and then add to the ice water until completely cool. Keep frozen and use within 6 months.

The stems can also be pickled and stored in the refrigerator.

BEST OF BROCCOLI

- Produce large yields.
- Good base crop for self-sufficiency
- Versatility - can be used in a wide range of ways and dishes.
- Easy to prepare for meals.
- Low maintenance care.
- Can be grown in pots, containers or the garden.
- Staple greens for nutrients.
- The whole plant is edible.