



HOME GARDEN GREENS

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Leafy greens, such as turnips, mustard, collards, kale, and spinach are cool season crops. They should be grown during early spring or fall for maximum yields and quality, but this season can be extended if desired. Kale and spinach can withstand temperature into the upper teens and are often harvested through winter in the east. The other greens may withstand medium frosts.

Soils

Greens may be grown on a variety of soils. Loams will generally produce the greatest yields but for early spring growth and overwintering, sandy loams are best. Soils should be well drained, rich in organic matter and thoroughly tilled. A pH of 6.0 to 6.5 is desirable for all of the greens except spinach, which thrives best in a soil pH 6.5 to 6.8.

Fertilizers

Leafy vegetables require quick, continuous growth for best quality. They especially need nitrogen for good color and tenderness. Follow soil test results. For the average soils, use 3 lb of 10-10-10 per 100 ft² before planting. Sidedress with 3 oz of 10-10-10 per 100 ft of row 3 to 5 times after seeding or transplanting.

Culture

Weeds must be controlled by cultivation or with chemicals. Shallow cultivation is a must. Use a rolling cultivator or bunting cultivator. Irrigation is essential, especially

for the fall crop, since leafy vegetables require adequate moisture for continuous growth and high quality.

Insects

Cabbage worms, loopers, and aphids are major insect pests. Once aphids become established, they are difficult to control. A frequent program will be necessary throughout the production season. Insect problems are much worse in fall crops.

Harvesting

Harvest only healthy and well-formed plants, roots, or leaves. Remove all dis-colored or damaged leaves. Wash thoroughly in clean water to remove sand and dirt.

Turnips

Grow Purple Top White Globe variety when roots and tops are desired. Grow Seven Top or Shogoin for tops only. Plant rows 12 to 18 inches apart. Space plants 1/2 to 1 inch apart for tops, or 2 to 3 inches apart for roots.

Harvest turnips when tops are 4 to 8 inches high. Leaves may be cut above or below the crown. Pull roots when 2 inches in diameter.

Mustard

Grow Southern Giant Curled or Tendergreen (Mustard Spinach) varieties. Plant rows 12 to 30 inches apart, and plants 1 to 4 inches apart. The whole plant may be cut off or the individual leaves may be harvested.

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Collards and Kale

Grow the Vates, Morris Heading, or Carolina collard or Winterbor or Toscano kale varieties. Spacing depends on how plants will be harvested. If seed is drilled in the row and the young collard plants are to be harvested, similar to turnip greens, the rows may be 12 to 18 inches apart and the plants 2 to 4 inches apart. If 'head collards' are grown, the rows should be 18 to 35 inches apart and plants set or thinned to 12 to 18 inches apart in the row. About 2 pounds of seed are required for direct seeding for each acre. For spring collards, do not use young plants that have been in the open field all winter because they will often go to seed very early. Seed may be planted in protected beds in late winter for transplanting in early spring; seeded in the row in late winter and either cut as young greens or thinned; seeded in the row in late spring to mid-summer to be either transplanted, thinned, or left just as they were seeded and cut for young greens.

Spinach

Grow Chesapeake, Hybrid #7, Tye, Melody, or Old Dominion varieties. Rows should be 12 to 18 inches apart.

Plants should be 1 to 4 inches apart, if young plants are to be harvested. If older plants are to be harvested, plant 3 to 6 inches apart. Spinach may be harvested when 6 or more leaves have been formed. Cut the tap root with a knife or hoe just below the lower leaves or cut to 1 inch above the ground.

Specialty Greens

Arugula, cress, corn salad, New Zealand spinach, sorrel and specialty salad mixes all do well in North Carolina. One or more of those greens can be produced throughout the year. Try some of these greens to expand your culinary tastes. For more information, see bulletin *Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower and Greens Production in NC*.

| Planting Dates for Greens | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| | Coastal Plain | Piedmont | Mountains |
| Spring | Feb. 1 to April 15 | Feb. 15 to April 30 | March 1 |
| Fall | Aug. 1 to Sept. 15 | July 15 to Sept. 15 | Aug. 15 |