

Cleveland Seed Bank's

guide to growing

COLLARDS

Domestication of collards began over 5,000 years ago in the Mediterranean. They are one of the oldest members of the cabbage family.

When Portuguese settlers brought collard seeds to Africa, the culinary wisdom of African cooks elevated and transformed the leafy green crop, preparing it in a myriad of ways, most popularly by stewing it down into a seasoned sauce. Recognizing the deep leafy greens as highly nutritious, Africans brought the important crop seeds with them to the American colonies. With exceptionally high iron, and vitamins A, C, and K, collards have since become both a symbol and nourishing staple in the American South.

Collards share the same scientific name as kale and they differ only in their leaf characteristics.

Latin name: *Brassica oleracea var. acephala*

Sun: Full

Life cycle: Biennial

Direct sow or transplant: Both

Height: 18-36" depending on variety

Container Friendly: Yes



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SOW



Direct sow/transplant: Collards prefer to be transplanted and kale prefers being direct sown, although try what works best for your garden!

Common mistakes: Kale is slightly more cold-hardy, while collards are more heat tolerant. If pests become an issue, drape row cover over crops.

Days to germination: ~ 3-10 days, depending on temperature and weather.

When: Collards and kale are cold-hardy & can be direct sowed 4-6 weeks before final frost. If transplanting, start indoors 9 weeks before final frost.

Seedling Depth: 1/2 inch deep.

Spacing: Sow seeds every 3-4 inches. Once the leaves start to overlap, thin plants every 12-18 inches apart to prevent overcrowding and increase airflow.

Succession sowing: Since these are perfect "cut and come again" crops, collards and kale are usually not succession sown.

Companion planting: Herbs and baby greens are a great choice - especially dill, basil, and cilantro.

GROW

Soil: Collards enjoy well-draining, fertile soil with a pH of 6.0-7.5.

Trellising Collards and kale will likely not need trellis or stake support.



Containers: A 10+ gallon container is needed if you plan to harvest the whole plant. For microgreens, a smaller container can be used.

Pests: Look for evidence of grasshoppers, harlequin bugs, and cabbage worms on the leaves. Wildlife such as deer, groundhogs, and rabbits will likely try to snack on the leaves too!

Diseases: Bean Mosaic Virus, white mold, and Anthracnose all affect bean plants. Avoid overcrowding and avoid watering on bean leaves to prevent excess humidity around the plant.

HARVEST



Collards and kale can be enjoyed even while immature.

The leaves are especially tasty and sweet after experiencing light frost!

Cut and come again: For a fresh harvest all season long, harvest from the outer leaves first to avoid damage to new growth.

One and done: Consult the seed packet for the 'days to maturity' time. Once your collard or kale is fully mature, typically about the size of a diner plate, cut the entire plant at the base.

If you plan to save seeds, remember that collards and kale are biennials and need to overwinter to produce flowers and seeds!



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SAVE

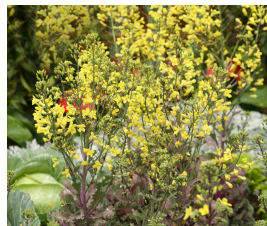
Kale and collards are insect-pollinated. Isolation is needed to prevent cross-pollination.



2 Wait to harvest seedpods after they dry and turn brown. Break open pods by hand.



1 *Collards are biennials and must overwinter before flowering and producing seed the 2nd year.



3 Separate the seeds from the chaff by winnowing or using a colander. Seed is viable for 4-5 years.

*Kale seeds can be saved like Collard seeds.

Preserving the harvest: Collards and kale are often eaten fresh, but there are other ways to preserve the harvest too!

Dehydrate or dry and eat as a snack. Grind down to make a fine powder - add to smoothies or sauces and enjoy!

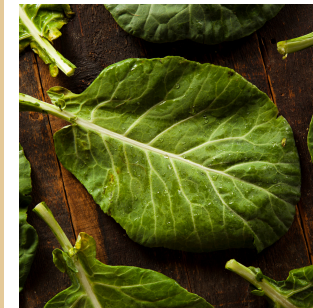
Blanch greens before freezing to preserve flavor and texture. Greens can also be pickled.

Season greens as desired before pressure canning.

TYPES

Collard greens: Collards were selected to withstand more frost than spinach and more heat than lettuce! Collards typically have smooth, thick leaves, although some varieties are more savoyed.

Kale: While kale has similar growing needs as collards, kale usually has more wrinkled leaves. Ornamental cultivars have also been selected for various leaf shape and texture.



Collard green leaves



Kale leaves



Ornamental kale



Hen Peck collards



Champion collards



Lacinato kale