How to Grow Chinese Cabbage

Chinese cabbage has a delicate flavor. You may know this vegetable by many different names, including celery cabbage, michihli, pak choi and wong bok. Depending upon which variety you select, the cabbage heads grow either loosely formed or compact. This plant will normally grow to around 8” tall. The flavor is a bit like lettuce and can range in taste from sweet to a tangy mustard-like taste. The Chinese cabbage stems can be eaten raw like celery, or cooked like asparagus.

Note: Chinese cabbage is not a good choice for container gardening.

How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Nutrition Information
This vegetable provides: folic acid, vitamin A, C, K, B6, Potassium, Phosphorus, Protein, thiamin, Niacin, Dietary Fiber, Riboflavin, Folate, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Potassium and Manganese. Additionally, it is said to have anti-inflammatory properties.

How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Climate & Growing Conditions
Cool temperatures are best for growing chinese cabbage. However, there are tropical varieties available also.

Chinese cabbage will grow well with exposure to lots of sun, but it does tolerate partial shade. It needs shelter from wind and frost.

How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Preparing the Garden Soil
Growing chinese cabbage is best in deep, well-drained soils mixed with plenty of compost. Avoid both light and heavy soils. The gardening soil pH range for chinese cabbage should be from 6.5 to 7. (Instructions: testing your garden plot's soil pH level.)

The key to gardening this plant is regular watering and fertilizing, to promote rapid growth. If chinese cabbage is allowed to grow too slowly, it will go to seed rather than produce the crop you desire. Chinese cabbage bolts (goes to seed) during dry hot weather.

Gardening Tip for growing Chinese Cabbage - Mulch heavily to retain soil moisture and ward off bacterial rot.
If you prefer to have tender white inner leaves, bind the heads (as you do with cauliflower) when the vegetable heads approach maturity.

**How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Planting**

Plan your planting of chinese cabbage such that it reaches maturity before fall's first frost arrives.

It is best to plant the seeds directly in the garden (chinese cabbage doesn't transplant well). Sow seeds 1/5 in deep and in clumps along the row with enough seed so that you can later thin the seedlings to 1' apart. To make it easier to water the rows, allow 14" of space between rows. Seedlings normally emerge within 2 weeks of planting.

**How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Watering**

This vegetable needs a lot of water. Water frequently.

**Gardening Tip for growing Chinese Cabbage** - Consider irrigating between the rows/beds to help keep water off the leaves (which helps prevent plant fungal problems).

**How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Fertilizing**

Prepare the garden bed for growing chinese cabbage by digging in a complete fertilizer one week before planting.

One month after planting, spread small amounts of the same fertilizer around the garden bed and water in immediately.

When cabbages heads start to appear, give them an extra growing boost by applying a light dressing of fertilizer.

**How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Gardening Challenges**

Chinese cabbage is prone to soil diseases such as club root and bacterial soft rot. Protect the crop by applying lime to your soil in the off season, and rotate this vegetable with unrelated crop several times over a few years.

You may also experience caterpillars or aphids on this vegetable in your garden.

**Gardening Tip for growing Chinese Cabbage** - Practice good vegetable gardening by rotating your crops within your garden space with each new season. This will prevent many plant diseases.
How to Grow Chinese Cabbage - Harvesting

Chinese cabbage will usually grow to maturity in less than 4 months, and should be harvested in dry weather before the seed stalks appear (or the cabbage heads will split). Cut the heads just above the soil, when the heads feel solid.