

# How to Grow Kale

**OVERVIEW:** Kale does not do well in hot weather, but doesn't mind the cold. Depending on your climate kale can also be sown in October for spring use if covered with straw during the winter. Kale is rich in Vitamins A and C, high in potassium, calcium and iron, and is a good source of fiber. Kale maintains flavor best when frozen. Kale is also great in salads.

PLANT TYPE: Annual  
SCIENTIFIC NAME: Brassica oleracea var acephala  
LIGHT: Full Sun  
SOIL TYPE: Organically rich soil, well-drained  
pH RANGE: 6.0 - 7.0  
MOISTURE/WATERING: Average  
MATURITY IN DAYS: 55 - 60  
KNOWN PESTS: Cabbage worms and loopers, root maggots, aphids and Diamondback moths  
KNOWN DISEASES: Head rot and downy mildew

**PROPAGATION / SOWING OF KALE:** Plant kale as soon as the ground can be worked, very frost tolerant. Sow ¼-½” deep, 1” apart in rows 18-30” apart. Thin seedlings to 8-12” apart. Kale germinates easily in cool or warm soil temperatures with even moisture.

**COMPANION PLANTING OF KALE:** Bush bean, beet, celery, cucumber, lettuce, onion, potato.

**CARE & GROWING OF KALE:** Choose an area with full sun and a soil pH of 6.0-7.0. Enrich the soil with compost or well rotted manure. Flavor of kale is improved if the plants grow quickly. Kale benefits from additional feedings of liquid fertilizer during the growing season.

**HARVESTING OF KALE:** Kale leaves can be used at any time for salads or as garnishes. Leaves are “cropped”, leaving the bud to grow new leaves, or the entire kale plant is harvested at one cutting. For a fall crop, wait until the kale plants are touched by a frost to sweeten the taste.

**KALE PESTS & DISEASES:** Cabbage worms and loopers on kale (white and yellow butterflies) can be decreased with the use of row covers to block out all insects including root maggots, aphids and Diamondback moths. Maintaining a soil pH of 6.8 and higher will discourage club root. Fungal and bacteria diseases on kale such as head rot and downy mildew can be prevented by allowing good air circulation and avoiding a mid August maturity when the air humidity is higher. Strong healthy kale growing in an organically rich soil will be better able to fight disease.