

COLLARDS

Brassica oleracea var. viridis

Brassicaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

The Brassica family is thought to have originated in the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor. The wide, smooth, blue-green leaves of *Brassica oleracea var. viridis* have a spinach-like flavor and are the highest in nutrients of the dark green, leafy vegetables.

Uses

This non-heading variety of cabbage can be relied upon to produce a better yield at warmer temperatures than most of the other Brassicas.

Cultivation

- Elevation: In warmer climates, Collards grow better at higher, cooler elevations (sea level to 2,000 m (6500 ft),
- Rainfall: Moisture is essential, up to 5 mm daily, 300-350 mm (12-14 in) over the growing season with mulch to conserve the soil moisture.
- Soil types: Collards prefer soils that have a balanced pH of 5.5 to 6.0 and that are rich in minerals. Organic matter dug in before planting and applied during the season is beneficial.
- Temperature range: Collards are better suited to temperate climates, preferring cool, moist soil and air, 15°-22° C (55°-70° F) and will withstand mild freezes.

Plants store well when left in the ground and lightly covered with mulch.

Harvesting and Seed Production

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Pests and Diseases

Rotate crops of Brassicas as soil will harbor micro-organisms that can re-infect each year's crop. The larvae (caterpillars) of many insects will chew holes in the leaves and leave webs and droppings to rot the plant. Pick off caterpillars, use row covers, pheromone lures, interplant with repellent strong-smelling plants such as sweet basil, alliums or marigolds or use a neem-based spray or a microbial spray such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT).

Cooking and Nutrition

This low calorie vegetable retains its nutrients (Vit. A & C and calcium) best when eaten raw or steamed briefly. Collards also provide a good supply of folate, vitamin B and an easily-digested form of iron. Chop fresh washed greens into 1-inch pieces and simmer until tender adding onions, garlic, lemon juice or vinegar. Leaves can be dried for storage.

References

[Plants for a Future](#) (syn - acephala)

[Prota4U](#)