

CHINESE KALE

Chinese Broccoli

Brassica oleracea alboglabra

Brassicaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Origin

The Greeks and Romans used Chinese Broccoli as a vegetable 2500 years ago. Its origin is believed to be the Atlantic coastline of Europe and the Mediterranean though it is now cultivated widely in Australia.

Uses

Compared to common broccoli, this plant has more leaves and longer stems. It is particularly popular in Chinese communities as a green vegetable.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Brocoli Chino
 - Repollo Chino

Cultivation

Although considered a cool weather crop (18°-28° C (63°-82° F)), Chinese Broccoli will withstand more heat than other species but is also tolerant of light frost. Sown at the beginning of the coolest month, it can be a year-round crop in the tropics. It needs some irrigation, as it is shallow-rooted, prefers soil that is organic matter enriched and well drained.

Harvesting and Seed Production

A crop can be harvested as early as 55 days after sowing, before buds become flowers while stems are young and tender. Morning hours, before temperatures rise are preferable for harvesting. Frequent cuttings can be made from the same plants. Planting seeds densely, 8 cm -12 cm (3 in - 5 in) between plants will encourage slower maturation and more leaves than stems. After harvest, Chinese broccoli is very susceptible to water loss and will only keep for 14-21 days at 0° C (32° F).

Pests and Diseases

Farmers have found that sowing Chinese Broccoli and mustard in the same field one week apart serves as a pest management method. The broccoli gets a week's head start on the mustard. When the mustard grows, it shades out the weeds and attracts flea beetles and aphids that would otherwise be damaging the broccoli crop but prefer the mustard instead.

Cooking and Nutrition

As is typical of other vegetables that are intensely colored, Chinese Broccoli is quite nutritious, being a good source of vitamins C and A, some B vitamins and minerals. To retain its valuable nutrients, it should be lightly steamed, stir-fried or served raw and eaten when it is slightly crunchy.

References

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