

Brussels Sprouts

Like their cousins in the cabbage family, Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea*) are a long-season, cool weather crop. They are grown for fall harvest because cool weather during maturity is essential for good flavor and quality. Plants are tall (sometimes 2 to 3 feet) and erect. The sprouts develop in the leaf axils and mature along the stalk. The lowest leaves can be removed to hasten sprout development. Treat Brussels sprouts as an annual. Yield is approximately 4-6 lbs. per 10-foot row.

Planting:

Sow seeds early to midsummer. Cool temperatures (60°- 65°F) are best. Transplant when seedlings are about 3 inches tall. Space 12"- 18" apart; 24" between rows. Plants should be in their permanent place 90 – 100 days before the first frost date.

Cultivation:

- **Fertilizing** – Heavy feeder. Side-dress with a balanced fertilizer 2 to 4 weeks after planting or when plants are 12 inches high.
- **Watering** – Keep watered during the heat of summer; needs ample soil moisture.
- **Special Directions** – Plants maturing in hot and dry conditions may develop bitterness or fail to form compact sprouts.

Harvesting:

Harvest when sprouts are hard, compact, deep green, and about 1 to 1½ inches in diameter. Pick after frosty weather for best flavor. Twist or snap them off at the stalk. The lowest sprouts mature first. Harvest before leaves turn yellow. The lowest leaves can be removed to hasten sprout development.

Storage and Preservation:

Very cold (32°F), moist (95% RH) conditions. For best flavor, refrigerator storage should not exceed a day or two, but they will keep 3 to 5 weeks. Can be blanched and frozen to keep up to one year.

Nutrition:

A source of Vitamins A, C, K, B6, and folate; potassium and manganese

Preparation & Use:

Rinse sprout with cold water; drain. Trim stem ends; cut large sprouts in half lengthwise. It's sometimes recommended to make an "x" cut in the stem end for even cooking. Steam, boil, roast or microwave or chop and sauté in olive oil.

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