SNAP-Ed

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Growing in Washington

Kale

In Partnership with FOOD HERO FoodHero.org

Quick Garden Tips

1. Kale is packed with vitamins and is easy to grow.
2. Kale can be harvested year round, but it is a cool-season crop that produces the most in spring and fall.
3. Direct seed into the ground or container you will harvest from in early spring or late summer.
4. You can also begin seed starts in the spring about 4 to 6 weeks before the average last frost date to transplant later.
5. For best taste and texture, avoid letting the soil dry out.

Season and Location

✿ Plant kale in fertile, well-drained soil in sun or part shade.

Container Gardening

✿ A kale mix meant to be harvested as baby salad greens would be ideal to start from seeds in a container in early spring. A dwarf variety would also do well.

Key Pests and Diseases

Kale has few pests and disease issues.

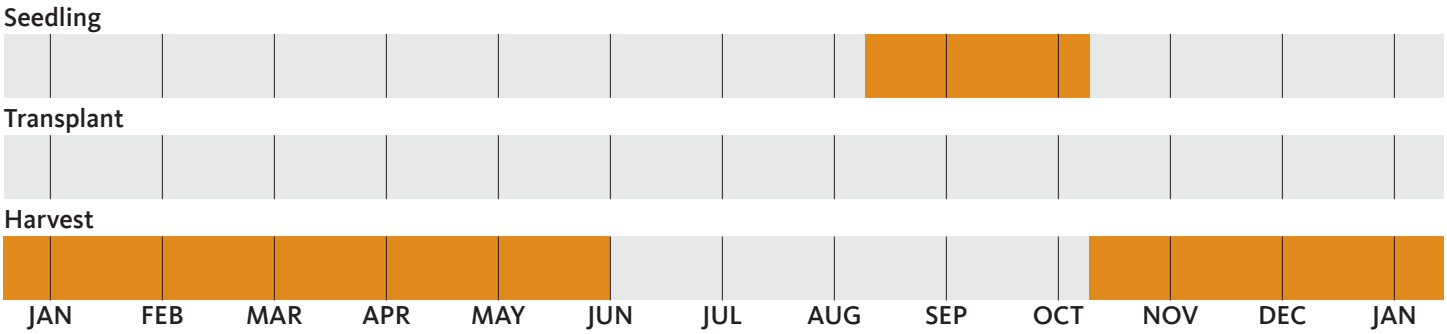
✿ Control aphids with a hard spray of water.

Aphid
Not actual size

✿ Control flea beetles and cabbage worms with plant covers.

✿ To help reduce disease, do not plant kale or other "cole crops", such as cauliflower, cabbage, and broccoli in the same spot more than once every three or four years.

Washington Gardening Calendar for Kale



Adapted from WSU Extension Publication EM0575E.

Recommended Types to Grow

Kale can be smooth, bumpy, curly or lacy and light green to deep purple.

Varieties to consider: Dwarf Green Curled Lacinato, Red Russian, Winterbor

When and How to Harvest

- Kale leaves can be eaten at any stage of growth.
- To extend the harvest, use the cut-and-come-again method, removing the outer leaves while they are still tender and no more than 8 inches long.
- To pick kale, clip or twist the base of the leaves close to the stalk. You can also harvest the entire plant by pulling it up by the roots. For best flavor, harvest in early morning or after a frost. Cold weather improves the flavor.

Storage and Cooking

- Refrigerate harvested kale in an open or perforated plastic bag for 5 to 7 days. Flavor becomes stronger and more bitter as kale is stored. You can eat kale raw or cooked.
- For raw salads, cut or strip away the thick stems. Chop the leaves and massage them to soften and reduce the bitterness.
- Blend fresh or frozen kale into smoothies and juices.
- Steam or sauté kale or mix chopped or torn leaves into sauces, soups, bean dishes and stir-fries.

Crunchy Baked Kale Chips

Preparation Time: 20 minutes **Cooking Time:** 15 minutes **Makes:** 3 cups

Ingredients

1 bunch fresh **kale** (about 8 cups, chopped)

1 tablespoon **vegetable oil**

½ teaspoon **salt**

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
3. Rinse kale under cool running water. Cut or strip away the thick stem from each leaf and dry leaves in a salad spinner or blot with a paper towel.
4. Tear or cut leaves into bite-sized pieces, place in a large bowl and drizzle with oil. Toss to coat well.
5. Place on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt.
6. Bake until edges are brown and crispy, about 10 to 15 minutes. Serve hot.

The Basic Food Program can help provide a healthy diet consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This material was funded by USDA'S Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–SNAP. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, visit http://foodhelp.wa.gov or contact the Basic Food Program at 1-877-501-2233. SNAP-Ed is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. This institution is an equal opportunity employer.