

Broccoli

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Broccoli is a cool-season vegetable which grows at 65-75°F. It can be grown by direct seeding or transplanting. Broccoli should be planted in rows that are three feet apart. Space the plants 1½ to 2 feet apart in the row. Well-drained soils are needed for growing broccoli. For more growing information, look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden*, at www.msuxextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Broccoli heads, or compact clusters of unopened flower buds, and the attached stem, are the edible parts of the plant. Select compact and fully-developed heads. Harvest before it begins to loosen, separate, or turn yellow. Once the central head has fully developed, cut from the plant, keeping 5-6 inches of the stem intact. Removing the central head stimulates the side shoots to develop for later cuttings.



Selection

Look for large, firm, and bright green or dark-green heads.

Storage

Store the broccoli, unwashed, in loose or perforated plastic bags in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator. It can be refrigerated for 3-5 days.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Broccoli is high in folate and Vitamins C, A and K and also a good source of potassium and dietary fiber, with 15 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Boil or Steam. Place chopped broccoli florets and/or stems (evenly-sized pieces) into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 10-15 minutes until individual pieces are tender enough to easily pierce through with a fork, or until desired tenderness.

Microwave. Place broccoli florets or chopped broccoli in a microwave-safe dish with 2-3 tablespoons water. Microwave on high for 5-8 minutes or until tender.

Pasta, Salad or Stir-fry. Chop broccoli into 1/4- to 1/2-inch florets to any lasagna, pasta sauce, or pasta salad. Add to any green salad or stir-fry dish.

Raw. Rinse and trim broccoli to enjoy plain or with a low-fat dip such as yogurt.

Roast. Place broccoli spears in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until broccoli is coated. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 15-20 minutes or until tender.

Season. To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, curry powder, dill weed, garlic, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, tarragon, thyme or lemon juice.

Preserve. For information on preserving broccoli, look for MontGuides: *Drying Vegetables*; *Freezing Vegetables*; *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msuxextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Rinse broccoli to remove sand and dirt.



Cut florets from the stalk. Pull apart or chop florets.



Chop broccoli into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sections to add to salads and pastas or for eating raw.



Trim stalks and cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch sticks. Stalk can be chopped or cubed to use in soups and stews.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuextension.org

MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org

MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuextension.org/nutrition

MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buysatlivebetter.org

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Spice Advice. (2013). Spice usage tips. <http://www.spiceadvice.com/news/usage/chart.html>

Smith, P., Doubrava, Nancy. (2003). Broccoli. Clemson Cooperative Extension Home & Garden Information Center. <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/vegetables/crops/hgic1301.html>

University of Illinois Extension. (2013). Broccoli. *Watch Your Garden Grow*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/broccoli.cfm>