



Harvest of the Month: Brassicas

Video Transcript

This month's Harvest of the Month is Brassicas. "Brassica" is a genus, or a group of closely related plants, in the mustard family. There are over 3,700 species in the brassica family, ranging from cauliflower to kohlrabi.

Several of these vegetables were derived from the same ancestor, wild mustard or *Brassica oleracea*, and were cultivated, or bred, for different parts of the plant. This includes: broccoli (cultivated for big flower buds and stems), cabbage (cultivated for terminal leaf buds), cauliflower (for branched stems), kale (for leaves), Brussels sprouts (for lateral leaf buds), kohlrabi (for enlarged bulb-like stems), and others. Many of the Brassicas that we enjoy as food today either originated in northwest Europe or the Mediterranean, but over the past 2,000 years, Brassicas were most likely domesticated in the Mediterranean region. The ancient Greeks recorded medicinal and culinary uses of Brassicas. Brassicas are a perfect addition to any Montana garden. They enjoy cooler weather and can be planted as early as April in Montana.

A popular brassica grown in Montana is cabbage. Cabbage varieties vary greatly in shape, size, and color. Look for purple, green, and white cabbages! Cabbages take 50 to 100 days to mature, and the right timing and temperature are imperative for growing healthy, flavorful, and beautiful Brassicas. In the right conditions, cabbage can be kept fresh for several months!

The vegetables in the Brassica family can be enjoyed in many ways including fresh, frozen, steamed, roasted, fermented, pickled, or canned. The USDA MyPlate guidelines recommends eating between 1 to 3 cups of vegetables daily to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Brassicas are a good source of many vitamins including potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin B6. Vitamin A is important because it helps maintain good vision and keeps skin healthy. All Brassicas are also rich in phytochemicals, including antioxidants, which can help to protect the body from disease.

Brassicas are a tasty and diverse vegetable that can be enjoyed in your meals or on their own as a healthy snack. Let's learn how to use brassicas to make a nutritious meal: Cabbage Stir Fry!

Enjoy Montana Brassicas all month long. The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases a different Montana-grown food each month in Montana communities. We hope you'll join us in tasting Montana this month.

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