

Broccoli

It's hard to believe that broccoli was not grown commercially in the U.S. until the 1920s. This member of the cabbage family is surprisingly easy to grown in home gardens as either a spring or a fall crop. You can steam broccoli, add it to salads, serve raw with a dip, or include it in casseroles - it's *loaded* with Vitamin A, calcium, and Vitamin B₂.

Growing: When/Where to Plant

For a spring crop, set out transplants in early spring (mid-March in the Piedmont); plant a fall crop in late summer. Check the link to the Central NC Planting Calendar (listed under Resources) for the best date ranges.

How to Plant

Loosen the planting bed and add any amendments recommended by the soil test. Water bed thoroughly before setting out transplants, which should be spaced around 12 inches apart.

Soil Requirements/Fertilizer

Broccoli grows best in a sunny location with fertile, well-drained soil and a pH level between 6.0 and 7.0. Take a soil test; it will let you know if lime applications are needed, or if soil macronutrients need to be supplemented. Plants may benefit from some additional nitrogen midway through their growing season - look for a fertilizer recommended for vegetables, and read and follow all instructions on the product label.

Harvesting

Spring broccoli should be harvested in the early morning because it wilts rapidly in the sun. Cut the central head with a sharp knife. This will stimulate side shoots for later cutting.

MORE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION:

Central NC Planting Calendar for Annual Vegetables, Fruits and Herbs

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/central-north-carolina-planting-calendar-for-annual-vegetables-fruits-and-herbs>

NC Extension Gardener Handbook – chapter 16, Vegetable Gardening

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/16-vegetable-gardening>

Vegetable Gardening: A Beginner's Guide

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-a-quick-reference-guide>

NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/brassica-oleracea-italica-group>

LIST COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY NC STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERSM VOLUNTEERS, GUILFORD COUNTY
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