

# Cabbage

What on earth would we do in North Carolina without crunchy, delicious cabbage for the coleslaw we eat with our barbecue? A member of the brassica family, cabbage is versatile, easy to grow as either a spring or fall crop, and loaded with Vitamin C. You can grow the traditional green cabbage with fairly smooth leaves, or you can grow deep red cabbage or Savoy cabbage, which has delightfully crinkled leaves. You can add it to sandwiches, boil it and serve with butter, pickle it into sauerkraut, chop or slice it for salads and slaws, and add it to any stir-fry recipe. Low in calories and amazingly flexible in its many uses, cabbage deserves a place in every garden.

## Growing: When/Where to Plant

For Spring - set out transplants in early spring, 4 weeks before last frost. For Fall - plant in late summer. Check the link to the NC Planting Calendar (listed under Resources) for the best date ranges in your area.

## How to Plant

Set plants deeply so that about 1/2 inch of the stem is buried. Space the plants 12 inches apart and water regularly (1 inch per week).

## Soil Requirements/Fertilizer

Cabbage grows best in a sunny location with fertile, well-drained soil and plenty of organic matter. A pH of 6.5-6.8 is optimal. Take a soil test and follow the recommendations, which 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

Before picking, squeeze head to make sure it is firm. Using a sharp knife, cut through the stem below the head. Remove the head but leave the stem in the ground for possible further growth.

**Special Note:** Try not to grow cabbage or related crops in the same spot more than once every three years to reduce disease pressure.

## 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-capitata-group>

**LIST COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY NC STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER<sup>SM</sup> VOLUNTEERS, GUILFORD COUNTY**  
**In Guilford County, contact us with questions: email [guilfordmg@gmail.com](mailto:guilfordmg@gmail.com), or leave a message at 336-641-2404**