



BRASSICAS WITH AN ASIAN TWIST

VEGETABLE	SOW SEEDS	SOWING METHOD	HARVESTING
Baby Broccoli	All year	In ground or punnet	From 8 weeks
Kailaan	August to October	In punnets	From 9 weeks
Pak Choy varieties	July to March	In punnets	From 8 weeks
Tatsoi and Yukina	All year	In ground	From 6 weeks
Wombok	February to May	In punnets	From 11 weeks
Vitamin Green	All year	In punnets	From 7 weeks
Mustard Greens	All year	In ground	From 4-8 weeks

Baby Broccoli (Happy Rich)

Eat the stems, leaves and flowers. Use all in stir-fries or steam as broccoli.

Harvest continually to prolong production. If the flower is allowed to develop, seed heads will soon form and production ceases.

Kailaan (syn Kai-Lan, Gai Lan)

Long succulent stems, topped with compact, juicy broccoli heads. Grow them closely together as they have a narrow and upright growth habit. All parts are good to eat. Excellent steamed or in stir-fries or laksas. Bitter-sweet flavour with mustardy overtones.



Pak Choy varieties

Aim to grow these quickly in a moist and rich soil. Great in salads when young and stirfries and soups as they mature. Can be harvested leaves at a time to prolong cropping. Red and purple varieties are particularly rich in anti-oxidants.

Tatsoi and Yukina

Also known as Chinese Flat Cabbage or Rosette Bok Choy, Tatsoi has deep-green spoon shaped leaves with a rich flavour. They can be used in salad mixes when young, or steamed when older. Yukina is a larger, more robust version of Tatsoi. Use it in stir-fries or as a steamed vegetable.



Wombok

Also available in a mini version, this crisp Chinese cabbage can be used in Asian-style salads, stir-fries or as a base for Kimchi. Requires rich soil and protection from slugs and snails. Keep well watered.



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Vitamin Green

Velvety dark green leaves with crisp white stems. The leaves can be continually harvested. Use steamed, stir-fried or in soups.



Mustard Greens

These include leafy greens such as the fine leafed Mizuna and striking Giant Red. The baby leaves are used to give a mustardy and sometimes spicy tang to salads; and as they get older, they will zing up stir-fries with their flavour.



GROWING NOTES FOR BRASSICAS

Any plants of the brassica family prefer a soil that has had lime added recently (or in the previous season) to avoid common root diseases associated with acid soils. Aim for a pH no lower than 6.5. The soil must also be well-drained.

As hungry annuals, they do best in nutrient-rich soils, particularly needing nitrogen, so soils should be enriched prior to planting with plenty of mature composts and manures. (However, note that you shouldn't add lime to soil at the same time as adding manures. There is a resulting loss of the fertiliser. Wait two weeks between liming and fertilising). Growing brassicas after legumes or a green manure crop is beneficial so they get the most out of the nitrogen-rich soil.

Crop rotation is very important with any of the brassica family as soil-borne diseases are common. This means avoiding growing them in the same plot in consecutive years.

Fertilising will help these hungry plants. Side-dress with compost and apply liquid seaweed regularly. Other liquid organic fertilisers could also be used every few weeks, especially in sandy soils.

COOKING NOTES FOR BRASSICAS

Most nutrition is gained from eating the brassicas raw or only very lightly cooked, so stir-frying is a great option, or lightly steaming. Try sautéing some crushed garlic in olive oil and then tossing the vegetable through to just wilting. This makes a delicious and nutritious side-dish.

Reference: The Diggers Club Garden Annual 2012-2013

For enquiries or comment:

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