



**CORNELL  
COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION OF  
ONEIDA COUNTY**

# HOME GROWN FACTS

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## GROWING CABBAGE



This cool-season crop grows best when daytime temperatures are in the 60s F. Direct-seed or transplant spring crops for fresh use in summer. Plant fall crops for winter storage or sauerkraut

### Site Characteristics

#### Sunlight:

- full sun

Can tolerate light shade but will slow maturity. Light shade can be beneficial in warm weather.

#### Soil conditions:

- requires well-drained soil

Prefers well-drained, fertile soil high in organic matter, pH 6.0 to 7.5. Can tolerate slightly alkaline soil. This heavy feeder also needs plentiful, consistent moisture.

### Plant Traits

#### Lifecycle: annual

Biennial grown as an annual.

#### Ease-of-care: moderately difficult

Requires good soil, timely planting and protection from pests.

#### Height: 1 to 2 feet

#### Spread: 1.5 to 3 feet

#### Foliage color:

- light green
- medium green
- dark green
- red
- purple

Some green varieties have a bluish cast.

#### Foliage texture: coarse

#### Shape: cushion, mound or clump

#### Tolerates:

- frost - Tender leaves inside the head can be damaged by heavy freezes while the outer leaves appear unaffected.

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## Growing Information

### How to plant:

Propagate by seed

Germination temperature: 45 F to 85 F - Will germinate at soil temperatures as low as 40 F.

Days to emergence: 4 to 7

Seed can be saved 5 years.

### Maintenance and care:

Sow seeds indoors 6 to 8 weeks before average last spring frost. Keep soil warm (about 75 F) until germination. Then keep plants around 60 F. Provide direct sun so plants don't get leggy. When plants are 4 to 6 weeks old, transplants into garden 12 to 24 inches apart, in rows 18 to 34 inches apart. Use closer spacings for smaller, early varieties, wider spacings for larger, late-season varieties.

Can be direct seeded as soon as you can work the soil. Will germinate at soil temps as low as 40 F. Plant  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep, about 3 inches apart. Thin to final spacings.

Direct seed in summer for fall crop, or start transplants in late May and transplant in late June or early July.

Plants have shallow root systems. Avoid even shallow cultivation. Mulch to protect roots, reduce weed competition and conserve moisture.

Use floating row cover to protect crop from early pests.

When heads are mature, they are prone to splitting in response to any stress or a rain following a dry period. Avoid splitting by choosing varieties that resist splitting, spacing plants close together (8 to 12 inches for early varieties, 12 to 16 inches for later varieties), using shovel to sever roots on one side about 6 inches from the plant, or twisting plants after heads have firmed to break some of the roots.

To help reduce disease, do not plant cabbage or other cole crops in the same location more than once every three or four years.

### Pests:

Cabbage aphids - A hard stream of water can be used to remove aphids from plants. Wash off with water occasionally as needed early in the day. Check for evidence of natural enemies such as gray-brown or bloated parasitized aphids and the presence of alligator-like larvae of lady beetles and lacewings.

Cabbage root maggot - White maggot larvae tunnel in and feed on roots of plants. Damage causes wilting early on, death of plants later on.

Cabbageworms - Handpick and destroy. Row covers may be useful on small plantings to help protect plants from early damage. Put in place at planting and remove before temperatures get too hot in midsummer.

Flea Beetles - Use row covers to help protect plants from early damage. Put in place at planting and remove before temperatures get too hot in midsummer. Control weeds.

Cutworms - Control weeds. Cardboard collars around each plant give good protection.

Other pests:  
Cabbage loopers  
Slugs  
Nematodes

### Diseases:

Clubroot - Locate new plants in part of garden different from previous year's location. If that is not possible, remove infested soil and replace with fresh soil. Purchase healthy transplants or start seed in sterile potting mix or fresh ground. Rogue plants. Remove and discard or destroy entire infested plant along with immediately surrounding soil and soil clinging to roots. If soil infested, add lime to raise soil pH to 7.2

Purple blotch (*Alternaria porri*) - Avoid wetting foliage if possible. Water early in the day so above-ground plant parts dry as quickly as possible. Avoid crowding plants, allowing air circulation. Eliminate weeds around plants and garden area to increase air circulation. Practice plant sanitation. When plants are not wet, remove and destroy affected plant parts. In autumn rake and destroy all fallen or diseased leaves and fruit.

Other diseases: Cabbage yellows, Black rot, Black leg

### Varieties

Plant early, midseason and late varieties to spread out harvest. Early varieties tend not to store well. Late varieties tend to be better for storage or for making sauerkraut.

Some varieties are resistant to certain diseases and insects.

Varieties may vary in head size, shape (round, flat, conical) and colors (green, red or purple).

Savoy cabbage has wrinkled leaves, and is sometimes classed in a different group, *Brassica oleracea* var. *sabuada*.

Savoy varieties are prized for their flavor as well as their good looks.

Varieties recommended for New York include:

Early: Jersey Wakefield, Heads Up, Pacifica, Tastie

Midseason: Chieftain Savoy, Lennox, Market Prize, Ruby Perfection, Savoy Ace, Savoy King

Late: Huron

This publication may contain pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly, some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, and/or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or your regional DEC office. **READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.**