



**CORNELL  
COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION OF  
ONEIDA COUNTY**

# HOME GROWN FACTS

121 Second Street Oriskany, NY 13424-9799  
(315) 736-3394 or (315) 337-2531 FAX: (315) 736-2580

## GROWING COLLARDS



The flavor of this traditional Southern potherb is improved by frost. Very cold hardy (harvest can continue right through snow), collards are also among the most heat tolerant of cole crops.

### Site Characteristics

#### Sunlight:

- full sun

Prefers full sun in spring, but can benefit from light shade during hot 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. Prefers plentiful, consistent moisture. Can tolerate drought, but quality and flavor of leaves suffer.

#### Plant Traits

**Lifecycle:** annual; Biennial grown as an annual.

**Ease-of-care:** easy

**Height:** 1.5 to 3 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

#### Foliage color:

- medium green
- dark green

Some varieties have blue-green cast.

#### Foliage texture:

- coarse
- medium

#### Shape:

- cushion, mound or clump
- upright

As plants mature and lower leaves are harvested, plants begin to look less like a clump and start to resemble small palm trees with a cluster of leaves at the top of a long stem.

#### Tolerates:

- frost - Flavor improved when plants are “kissed” by frost.

### 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.

*Helping You Put Knowledge to Work*

Days to emergence: 4 to 7

Seed can be saved 4 years.

### Maintenance and care:

Direct seed about three months before expected fall frost. Plant seeds  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep, 1 inch apart in rows 18 to 30 inches apart. Thin to 12- to 18-inch spacings. Eat or transplant thinnings.

For spring crops, start plants inside about 8 weeks before the last frost, and transplant when they are about 6 weeks old. Set transplants 12 inches apart, rows 18 to 24 inches apart.

Plant direct-seeded crops  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep and 3 inches apart 3 weeks before last frost. Thin to 12 to 18 inches apart.

Mulch overwintering plants.

Collards don't seem to be as troubled by pests as most other cole crops. Use floating row covers to help protect from early insect infestations.

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

### Pests:

Cutworm	Cabbage loopers	Cabbageworms	Flea beetles
Cabbage root maggots	Cabbage aphids	Slugs and snails	Nematodes

Usually not as susceptible to pest damage as other cole crops.

### Diseases:

Clubroot	Black rot	Black leg	Alternaria
----------	-----------	-----------	------------

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

### Varieties

Choices are usually limited in seed catalogs. Some varieties form loose heads.

#### Some varieties recommended for New York include:

Champion

Blue Max -- hybrid

Georgia Green

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.**