



**CORNELL
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION OF
ONEIDA COUNTY**

HOME GROWN FACTS

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GROWING TURNIPS



Fast-growing spring turnip crops are best harvested while the weather is still cool. The flavor of fall crops is improved by light frost. Don't forget the greens which are delightful raw or cooked.

Site Characteristics

Sunlight:

- full sun
- part shade

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. Needs plentiful, consistent moisture. Loosen soil deeply or grow in raised beds to encourage good root development. Will tolerate less-than-ideal conditions, but poor soil will slow growth and hurt quality and flavor.

Plant Traits

Lifecycle: annual

Biennial grown as an annual.

Ease-of-care: easy

Foliage color: medium green

Foliage texture: medium

Deeply lobed or cut leaves on most varieties.

Shape: cushion, mound or clump

Tolerates:

- frost - Light frost improves flavor, but hard freezes will kill plant and damage roots.

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 4 years.

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

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Maintenance and care:

From early spring to late summer, sow seeds ¼ to ½ inch deep, 1 inch apart in rows 12 to 18 inches apart. Thin plants to 4- to 6-inch spacings.

Plant every 2 weeks for continuous harvest. Quality and flavor are best if harvested when weather is cool.

Use floating row cover to protect crop from early pests.

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

Pests:

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:

Root maggots

Cabbage loopers

Cabbageworms

Cabbage aphids

Slugs and snails

Nematodes

Diseases:

Black leg

Black rot

Turnip mosaic virus

While susceptible to the diseases that plague other cole crops, turnip diseases usually aren't a problem if grown in well-drained soil and harvested young.

Varieties

Look for a range of root size and shapes (globe, flat, cylindrical, egg-shaped), root color (most common are white, some with purple shoulders), and maturity dates (most mature in 30 to 60 days). Caution: Some varieties are grown strictly for their greens and produce poor quality roots.

Some varieties recommended for New York include:

Gilfeather

Purple Top White Globe

Tokyo Cross

Source: <http://explore.cornell.edu> 2006

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