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KNOW YOUR VEG Discover Brussel Sprouts

Here's the chance for you to discover some of the basic facts about Brussel Sprouts as well as some essential growing tips. Use these to decide whether you want to grow the vegetable, whether you are able to and what you need to do or look out for in order to grow a bountiful crop!



Brussel Sprouts

Other names: Brassica Oleracea

Appearance: Fleshy green flower heads arranged in a tree-like fashion on branches sprouting from a thick, edible stalk

Popular varieties: Arcadia AGM (summer crop) and Rudolph (mid-winter crop)

Interesting fact: Record for speed eating sprouts is 44 a minute!

Nutritional value: Vitamins A & C; vitamin B - folic acid; dietary fibre

When to grow: Mid-spring to early-summer

Grown from: Seed

Likes: Sunny site; firm, alkaline and deep soil; regular weeding and watering; nitrogen-rich fertiliser; mesh netting to fend off pests

Dislikes: Hot summer weather; slugs and snails

Harvest time: Early-autumn when sprouts are firm and size of a walnut

cooking tips: Steam or boil; Sunday lunch favourite particularly at Christmas as it's a winter vegetable; stir-fry or make into a soup

Essential Growing Tips for brussel sprouts



Brussel Sprouts

- Brussel Sprouts do best in well drained, firm, fertile soil. The soil should not have had any manure added to it. It should not be acidic.
- Plant in a sunny spot with some shelter from the wind. They grow tall and can be damaged by wind. The sprouts develop along the stem, with lots of leaves at the top.
- Sow seed outside in rows about 1cm (0.5") deep. When the seedlings develop their first true leaves, move them to their permanent home.
- Keep as much soil as possible around the roots when they are being moved. Plant the seedlings 60cm (24") apart. If you want baby sprouts, place the seedlings closer together.
- Water well. Feed with a leaf fertiliser during the summer.
- Watch out for caterpillars and insects attacking the growing plants during the summer. They can cause a lot of damage. Remove any caterpillars you see but the best way is to be preventative with insect-mesh a fine long lasting mesh that also keeps out birds too.
- You can grow companion plants like nasturtiums and marigolds nearby to distract the insects.
- Protect the plants from birds especially pigeons. They will eat the leaves and the tops of the plants. If this is a problem, the only effective answer is to cover with anti-pigeon netting.
- Sprouts can be picked from early autumn until mid-winter. Pick from the bottom of the plant and move upwards. Snap the sprouts off with a sharp downward tug or cut with a sharp knife.
- When all the sprouts on a stem have been picked, cut the stem top off. These leaves can be cooked and eaten like cabbage.
- Do not plant Brussel Sprouts on the same piece of ground two years running as diseases can build up in the soil.

**For further information call 0845 402 5300, or visit
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