

Brussels Sprouts



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 18 inches apart within rows or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container. Plant in August.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create a well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows pH is below 6.2, apply lime in May or June as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week. Avoid wetting leaves to prevent fungal disease. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep in August, or start seedlings 4 weeks before planting. Slowly harden off 1 week before moving to the garden. If buying transplants, choose those with healthy colors and a stocky appearance. Dig the planting hole as deep as the root ball. Firmly pat down soil and water deeply.

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Fertilize: In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting, according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), 3 weeks after transplanting.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect/disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 90 to 120 days, when sprouts become firm. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Brussels sprouts take 3 months or more to mature from seeds. Transplants are best for spring gardens. Begin removing sprouts from the base of the plant stem when they are firm and continue harvesting upward as new sprouts develop. Leave large basal leaves as they are essential for plant growth.

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