

Collard Greens



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 12 inches apart within rows or 1 plant per 5- to 7-gallon container. Plant February through mid-March and mid-August through mid-September.

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 October or November 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 seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. Start seedlings 6 to 8 weeks before planting, and slowly harden off 1 week before moving to the garden. If buying transplants, choose those with healthy color and a stocky appearance. Avoid plants with flowers. Dig the planting hole as deep as the root ball. Firmly pat down the soil and water deeply.

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 to 4 weeks after planting, and again following the first harvest.

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 60 to 80 days, when outer leaves become 8 to 10 inches long. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Remove only one-third of the plant's bottom lower leaves when harvesting.

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