

# Growing Cabbage

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## Selecting and Preparing a Site

Choose a site that receives 6–8 hours of full sunlight per day. Cabbage quickly depletes the soil of nutrients and needs a steady supply of water and nutrients. Prior to planting, prepare the soil by adding aged manure and/or compost. Soil should be well-draining and at a pH of at least 6.0.



## Planting

Cabbage needs soil temperatures of at least 50°F and air temperatures of 60°F to 65°F. In the central, western, and northern portions of Pennsylvania plant transplants outside from mid-April to early May. Cover the plants if frost is in the forecast. In southeastern portions of the state, plant transplants outside in mid-March for a spring harvest. In mid-August, transplant seedlings outside for fall harvests. Alternatively, seeds can be directly sown outdoors in all areas of Pennsylvania in mid-July for fall harvests. Do not plant cabbage in the same place more frequently than every two years as it is highly susceptible to diseases that linger in the soil.

If starting seeds indoors, sow the seeds four to six weeks before you plan to plant outside and harden off the plants over the course of a week before planting outdoors. Plant seedlings 12 to 24 inches apart, depending on the desired size of the head. Closer spacing yields smaller heads which tend to have a better taste and store more easily than larger heads. If planting more than one row leave 3 feet between rows.



## Caring for the Site

Cabbages need evenly moist soil. Apply mulch to retain moisture and regulate the soil temperature. Apply fertilizer 2 to 4 weeks after transplanting. When seedlings reach 5 inches tall, thin to the desired space between them.



## Harvesting

Most green cabbage varieties require 70 days to mature. Harvest cabbage once the heads are firm and are the desired size. Use pruners or a knife to cut off the head just below the base. Remove yellow leaves but retain loose green leaves as they provide protection. Immediately bring the heads indoors and place in the shade.



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