

Broccoli

Broccoli belongs to the species *Brassica*; as well as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, kohlrabi and large-leafed kale.

Broccoli likes cool temperatures and rich, well-drained soil. Broccoli can be planted when daytime temperatures cool to 60 degrees F. or lower. Seeds can be started indoors and transplanted into the garden in fall and early spring.

Sow seeds ¼ inch deep and 1 to 2 inches apart in pots or flats, and watch for germination in 5 to 17 days. Once the threat of hard frost has passed, you can plant out seedlings that have at least 6 leaves, burying 1 inch of each plant's stem and leaving 16 to 18 inches between plants in your garden full of good-quality planting mix. 3 weeks after transplanting mix in organic fertilizer around each plant.

Watch for pests, especially cabbageworms, cutworms and aphids. "Collars" made from cardboard cereal boxes work well to prevent cutworms. Cut a strip 3 inches by 12 inches to wrap around the stem when transplanting in the garden. Cut a small slit to hold together.

Harvest broccoli when heads are tight and green. Don't expect your heads to get to supermarket size. Remove main head with a sharp knife; leaving between 4 to 6 inches of stem. New side-shoots will then form and grow in a few weeks. If any of the buds open into yellow flowers, the broccoli is past its peak, although still edible.

Health Benefits of Broccoli

- Broccoli contains vitamins A, B, and C, as well as calcium, phosphorus, and iron.
- Broccoli provides special cholesterol-lowering benefits when steamed.
- Helps with vitamin D deficiency
- Digestive support
- Eye health
- Unique combination of antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and pro-detoxification components in broccoli make it a unique food in terms of cancer prevention and cardiovascular support

Top Seed Picks

'Small Miracle', 'De Cicco', 'Packman', 'Early Purple Sprouting', 'Green Goliath', 'Purple Peacock'

Broccoli Salad

Prep time: 10-15 min

Yield: Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 head broccoli (about 3 cups)
- 8 slices cooked bacon, crumbled
- ½ C. chopped red onion
- ½ C. raisins or dried cranberries
- 8 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, diced
- 1 C. mayo
- 2 T. vinegar
- ¼ C. Stevia
- 1 C. halved cherry tomatoes

Method:

Cut broccoli flowerets and stems into bite-size pieces. Place in large bowl and add crumbled bacon, onion, raisins or dried cranberries, and cheese.

In a small bowl, combine remaining ingredients, stirring well and add to broccoli mixture. Toss gently.

Refrigerate for one hour for flavors to meld. Serve chilled. Enjoy!