DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Home Gardening Series

Kohlrabi

Craig R. Andersen
Associate Professor and
Extension Specialist -
Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny
Soil – well-drained
Fertility – rich
pH – 6.0 to 7.0
Temperature – cool
Moisture – keep moist

Culture

Planting – transplant spring, direct seed fall
Spacing – 2-4 x 24 inches
Hardiness – hardy annual
Fertilizer – heavy feeder

Kohlrabi – *Brassica oleracea, gonglylodes* group

Kohlrabi was known to the Romans, and it was undoubtedly recognized in the Middle Ages, as shown in the *Capitulare de Villis of Charlemagne* written in AD 749. Today, cooked kohlrabi is widely used in continental Europe, but it is sparingly consumed in Britain and other English-speaking countries.

Kohlrabi (known as stem turnip) is a hardy, cool-season vegetable belonging to the cabbage family. It has a turnip-like appearance, with leaves standing out like spokes. The edible portion is an enlarged stem that grows just above the groundline. Kohlrabi is sometimes misclassified as a root vegetable.

Cultural Practices

Planting Time

Plant kohlrabi in late winter or early spring before the heat of summer and the stem gets woody. The best production is in the fall when the plants mature during cool conditions. Sow seed 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep in the row and cover. Thin seedlings to 2 to 5 inches apart. Transplant the surplus seedlings if more plants are needed in the row.

Care

Plant in fertile soil, maintain adequate soil moisture and keep down weeds. Proper care allows kohlrabi to achieve the rapid growth that results in best quality. Treat kohlrabi as you would broccoli or cabbage.

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Cultivars

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Seed Per 100 Feet of Row	Remarks
Kohlrabi	Grand Duke Hybrid	50	1/8 ounce	AAS winner, a vigorous, productive hybrid, produces smooth, pale green bulbs.
	Early White Vienna	55	1/8 ounce	Dwarf plants, white-fleshed bulbs with pale green skin.
	Purple Vienna	50	1/8 ounce	Purple leaves and globes that have white flesh.
	Winner Hybrid	57	1/8 ounce	Heavier yielding than Grand Duke, pale green bulb.
	Rapidstar	49	1/8 ounce	Large, early, slow bolting, good taste.
	Express Forcer	42	1/8 ounce	Compact plants, tender bulbs, tolerant of heat.

Abbreviation: **AAS**: All-America Selections®

Harvesting

Kohlrabi has the best and mildest flavor (resembling mild white turnips) when it is small. Unfortuntely, many gardeners allow kohlrabi to grow too large before harvesting. Large, older kohlrabi is tough, woody and may have an off-flavor. Harvest (pull and cut off the leaves) when the stem is 2 to 3 inches in diameter. Young leaves may be cooked like turnip greens. Store kohlrabi in the refrigerator like turnips or cabbage.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is kohlrabi and how is it grown?

A. Kohlrabi is a member of the cabbage family grown for its swollen, turnip-shaped portion of stem which rests on the ground. The edible portion can be white, purple or green with a creamy white interior. It is eaten raw in salads or cooked like a turnip.

Q. Does kohlrabi require any special cultural conditions to grow in Arkansas?

A. Kohlrabi can be grown anywhere turnips can be produced. They do best in cool weather with abundant moisture to prevent the edible portion from becoming tough and woody. Kohlrabi requires 50 to 65 days from seed to maturity. Start harvesting when slightly larger than a golf ball.

DR. CRAIG R. ANDERSEN is associate professor and Extension specialist - vegetables, Horticulture Department, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Fayetteville.

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