



Growing Cauliflower

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Cauliflower Has Many Varieties

There are a lot of options to consider when selecting Cauliflower seeds. You can have plants that will mature from 53 to 120 days, depending on the variety. You can also choose from white to orange to purple heads as well as the interesting broccoli-cauliflower hybrids

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They need full sun, but may need to be shaded on hot sunny days. They need well drained rich soil. You can increase the fertility of your soil by the addition of compost. Water deeply at least once a week & whenever the leaves look as if they are starting to wilt. Fertilize with an organic fertilizer rich in trace elements, especially magnesium and boron.

Once you have chosen your seeds, you will need to start them indoors from late March to mid April. When the plants are about 6 weeks old and hardened and the danger of frost is past they can be transplanted into the garden. They need a lot of room, so space them about 50-60cm apart (18-24"). The plants should be watered when transplanted to prevent wilting.

Mulch to prevent weeds and to help conserve moisture. When the head is about 6-8cm (2 or 3 inches) in diameter, use string or elastic to wrap the outside leaves over the head, making sure the head and leaves are dry. This will preserve the white colour. Some varieties have leaves that cover the head, making this step unnecessary. From this point on check daily as the head develops very rapidly.

Harvest

Start to harvest before they have reached their full size, while they are tight and compact. If the florets of the Cauliflower have started to open, it is too late. Cut the stalk with a sharp knife, keeping a few of the large leaves around the head to protect it. The rest of the plant can be removed from the soil, cut up and placed in the compost since no new heads will be produced.

Problems You Might Encounter

Cauliflower is prone to all of the same pests that Broccoli, Cabbage & Kale have. Prevent them by using row covers, putting them in place at planting. Remove them before temperatures get hot. Control weeds. Hand pick and destroy any insects or worms you may see on the plants. Aphids can be removed with a stream of water. Do not grow where Cabbage, Kale or Broccoli have grown within the past 3 years. Avoid crowding to allow good air circulation around the plants.

Storage

Cauliflower can be kept 2 -3 weeks if kept cool. It can also be frozen.

Learn more about growing cauliflower from the West Virginia University site <http://ext.wvu.edu> >

Learn more about cauliflower on [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cauliflower) >