

# Cole Crops

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Cole crops include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, collards, and Brussels sprouts. These are all cool-season crops that can be grown successfully in most Texas home gardens if planted at the right time. Brussels sprouts and cauliflower are the hardest to grow while kale, collards, broccoli, and cabbage are the easiest. For most gardens, broccoli is an ideal choice because it produces quickly, and each plant can be harvested several times.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- Green Magic and Pacman broccoli
- Snow Crow cauliflower

### Soil Preparation

- Add a 3-inch layer of compost to the garden soil.
- Dig the soil as deep as a garden spade or shovel will reach—usually 10 to 12 inches.

### Planting

- Most cole crops need 18 to 24 inches between plants and 36 inches between rows.
- Start with good transplants which can be bought from a nursery or garden center.
- Set the transplant in the garden at about the same depth it was in the transplant container.
- Planting time varies depending upon your location. For a fall crop, plant in mid-July to August in North and West Texas, in late August to September in Central Texas, and in October to November in South Texas.

### Fertilizing

- Incorporate a cup of 15-5-10 fertilizer or ¼ to 1/3 cup of organic fertilizer prior to planting.
- Creating raised beds about 6 to 8 inches high is most important in heavier soils as they do not drain very well.
- Water the fertilizer into the soil.
- Another application is usually needed about 4 weeks later.

### Watering

- Keep soil moist but not soaked.

### Care During the Season

- Mulch to keep the growing area weed free.
- When the cauliflower head can be seen easily, gather the longest leaves together over the head and tie them with a

rubber band or soft twine. This is called blanching. It shades the head and prevents it from becoming yellowish-green in color.

- Check plants often for insect damage. The head should be ready to harvest 8 to 10 days after blanching.

### Insects and Diseases

- Small holes on the leaves are typically a sign of worms (loopers). Control as needed with sprays containing Bt.

### Harvesting

- Cauliflower: Cut center heads when they are tight. Overly mature heads become open and loose.
- Broccoli: Cut center heads when the very first flower shows the slightest yellow color. Leave side sprouts for later harvest.
- Brussels sprouts: Sprouts appear between leaves and the main stem on lower leaves first. They must have cool weather for best quality. When the sprouts are about 1 inch in diameter and the lower leaves begin to turn yellow, cut off lower leaves and remove sprouts with your fingers or a knife. New sprouts form higher up the stem as the plant grows.
- Cabbage: Harvest when the head becomes firm. This can be tested by pressing with the thumb in the center of the head. Cabbage holds longer in the garden after maturity than others.
- Broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts should be harvested as soon as they are ready. Delayed harvest results in tough, poor-quality produce.

### Storing and Serving

- Cole crops are a good source of protein, minerals, and vitamins when properly prepared.
- Broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi, kale, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts can be served raw in salads or cooked.
- Steamed or mashed cauliflower or broccoli is a good warm dish for cold days.
- Cabbage is served cooked, raw in cole slaw, or processed into sauerkraut.



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-  
drained



Planting:  
Fall



Harvest:  
Winter-Early  
Spring



Life Cycle:  
Annual



Container  
Friendly

## Buy it

- Choose odorless broccoli heads with tight, bluish-green florets.
- Choose cauliflower with compact, creamy white curds and bright green, firmly attached leaves.
- Avoid brown spots or loose sections that are spread out.

## Use it

### Easy Broccoli and Cauliflower Salad

Course: Side Dish    Serves: 8

#### Ingredients:

- 4 cups cauliflower florets
- 4 cups broccoli florets
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup skim or 1% milk
- 4 oz fat-free cream cheese, cubed
- ½ cup plain, fat-free yogurt
- 1 cup reduced-fat, shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 10 low-sodium saltine crackers, crushed (about 1/3 cup)
- 2 Tbsp grated or shredded Parmesan cheese

#### Instructions:

Rinse broccoli and cauliflower. Cut into florets.

Place vegetables and ½ cup water in skillet.

Cover with the lid and allow to steam over high heat for 3 minutes or until tender.

Add milk to the skillet. Reduce to low heat.

Cut cream cheese into cubes and add to skillet.

Allow cream cheese to melt. Stir occasionally.

Add yogurt to skillet. Stir to coat.

Sprinkle with shredded cheddar cheese and allow it to melt.

Mix in cracker crumbs and Parmesan. Sprinkle over vegetables.



## Store it

- Refrigerate broccoli and use within 3 to 5 days.
- Refrigerate cauliflower in a plastic bag for up to 5 days.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

### Roasted Cauliflower and Grapes

Course: Side Dish, Snacks    Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 2 lb cauliflower florets
- ½ lb red grapes, halved
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 tsp rosemary (fresh or dried), chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper

#### Instructions:

Cut cauliflower into florets and place in a large bowl.

Slice grapes and place them in the bowl with the cauliflower.

Mince garlic and chop rosemary. Add to the bowl with the grapes and cauliflower.

Pour olive oil over cauliflower mixture.

Toss well. Spread cauliflower mixture onto a foil-lined baking sheet. Add a small pinch of salt and pepper. Place in the oven at 425°F for 30 minutes.

**“Broccoli”**  
is worth 12 points  
when playing  
Scrabble.

**Cauliflower**  
is not always white!  
Try purple and orange  
cauliflower, too.

## Learn about it

- Cole crops are free of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- They are low in sodium and calories.
- Cole crops are recommended sources of vitamin C, folate, fiber, and potassium.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

