

White Cabbage for processing Growing Guide

Brassica oleracea var capitata



Cabbages are in the Brassica genus and are closely related to other vegetables such as broccoli and Brussels sprouts. They are a low calorie vegetable which is high in minerals such as potassium, they are also high in vitamins A and C.

UK Market

Cabbages have many different uses; this specific type of cabbage is used for processing, predominately for coleslaw. The ideal white cabbage for processing is large, white internally and has smooth, flat leaves with no blisters.

Soil Types

Cabbages can be grown throughout the UK in a range of soils. Good drainage is important especially in winter as is a pH of 7-7.5, if pH is below pH7 (acidic) liming may be needed to increase pH as this can help suppress club root.

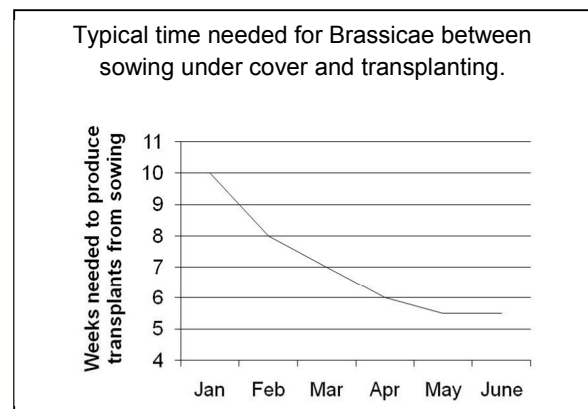
Growing

It is important that there is a continuous supply all the year around for processing. The early varieties are planted in March to April and harvested in July to October these are not stored but supplied directly from the field for processing. Later varieties are planted in April to May for harvesting in October to November. These are stored throughout the rest of the year the length of storage varies between different varieties.

White cabbages are normally grown in modules and then planted out into the field; the varieties for large cabbage production are planted 50-60 cm apart in 60 cm rows (20-24 inches by 24 inches), approximately 26,000 plants per hectare (10,500 plants per acre). Small white cabbage is normally planted 30 cm apart in 60 cm rows (12 inches by 24 inches), approximately 53,000 plants per hectare (21,500 plants per acre)

Transplant production:

The time needed between sowing and transplantation varies depending on the time of the year. It normally takes 8 weeks in February for the plants to be mature enough for planting, decreasing to May where 5 to 6 weeks is needed.



Post-harvest Treatment

Cabbages used for storage need to be harvested before hard frosts occur as this can reduce storage life and marketable yield. Most cabbages are kept in stores, less commonly now field storage is used in sheltered areas of the UK.

Diseases can affect the quality and make the product unmarketable; they can develop before and during storage. Plant viruses acquired during growth have a role in causing internal disease; they are difficult to control as they are spread by aphids. Treatments can be applied before storage for some control over certain storage diseases, normally shortly before loading into the store, and then allowed to drain and dry. Some losses normally occur in storage, this can be around 25% after trimming.

Changes in the storage regime occur throughout the season; initially the cabbages can be stored in ambient barn stores. As time progresses they need to be stored in cold stores. Controlled atmosphere cool (CAC) storage can be used for the storage, if used this would normally occur later in the storage period shortly before the new, fresh crop is introduced.

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Fertiliser usage

Source: The Fertiliser Manual (RB209) 8th edition (2011).

Nutrient	Soil index						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	kg/ha						
Nitrogen (N)	300	250	210	180	120	40	0
Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅)	200	150	100	50	0	0	0
Potash (K ₂ O)	300	250	200 (2-) 150 (2+)	35	0	0	0
Magnesium (MgO)	150	100	0	0	0	0	0

No more than 100kg/ha nitrogen should be applied at sowing or transplanting, any remaining should be applied when the crop is fully established.

Varieties available from Elsoms Seeds

We have a wide range of varieties available for the specialist grower, below are a few of the most popular. Please contact us if you have specific requirements.

Early maturing, very short term storage

Perfecta F1

An early variety suitable for processing

Almanac F1

High yielding variety. Approximately 90 days from transplant to maturity.

Bronco F1

Versatile variety can be used on high or low density. Extremely healthy and solid. Approximately 90 days from transplant to maturity.

Mandy F1

Healthy cabbage with good dry matter for a mid-season cabbage. Approximately 148 days from transplant to maturity.

Later maturing varieties – suitable for storage

Impala F1

Excellent holding ability in the field as well as in storage.

Counter F1

Very healthy, uniform and high yielding. Suitable for medium to long storage.

NEW Sircon F1

Sircon is a storage variety suitable for coleslaw production. It has a good all round disease resistance.

NEW Expect F1

Healthy, high yielding white cabbage with round heads and a dense internal structure. Suitable for long term storage.

Colmar F1

Produces very healthy clean heads with very long term storage potential.

Further information

For further information on the different varieties, seed treatments, pests and disease please contact your regional vegetable seed specialist or see the Elsoms Seeds catalogue.

Links

Elsoms Seeds website and catalogue:
<http://www.elsoms.com/>

The Fertiliser Manual (RB209)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/rb209-fertiliser-manual-110412.pdf>

The information provided in this sheet is intended for general guidance only and is correct to the best of our knowledge. Please be aware that variations in the growing environment and climatic conditions can render this information inaccurate. For more specific advice about fertiliser use please contact a FACTS certified advisor.

KCW/JAN13