

Home Gardening Series
Mustard Greens

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Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny
Soil – well-drained, deep
Fertility – medium-rich
pH – 6.0 to 7.0
Temperature – cool
Moisture – average

Culture

Planting – direct seed, spring or fall
Spacing – 2-6 inches x 24 inches, thin
Hardiness – cool season biennial
Fertilizer – medium

Mustard Greens – *Brassica juncea*

Mustard greens originated either in Europe and Siberia or in northwest India. The word “mustard” is derived from the Latin term “must,” which refers to the fresh juice or crushed pulp of grapes or other fruit with which the ground seeds of mustard were mixed for use as a condiment.

Mustard greens (also known as mustard spinach, leaf mustard and white mustard) are quick-maturing, easy-to-grow, cool-season vegetables that are commonly used cooked and as salad greens. Although mustard is grown primarily in the Deep South, it is also adapted to most states in the North. Mustard greens are high in vitamins A and C.

Cultural Practices

Planting Time

Plant early in the spring (three weeks before the frost-free date) and again three weeks later. Plant in mid to late summer for fall harvest. The later plantings are usually the best under Arkansas conditions.

Spacing and Depth of Planting

Sow seed 1/2 inch deep and thin seedlings to 2 to 4 inches between plants.

Care

Mustard grows rapidly. Fertilize and give water during dry periods.

Harvesting

Harvest the leaves when they are young and tender. Do not use wilted or yellow leaves. You can cut the entire plant or pick off individual leaves as they grow. The leaf texture becomes tough and the flavor strong in the summer.

Common Problems

Aphids, cabbage worms.

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Cultivars

Crop	Variety	Days to Maturity	Seed/ 100 Ft of Row	Sources (see "Sources" paragraph below)	Remarks
Mustard Greens	Southern Giant Curled	50	1/2 oz	2, 5, 6, 27, 29, 31, 35, 36	Large, bright green leaves with margins, slow bolting, good yield and quality.
	Tendergreen	40	1/2 oz	2, 6, 12, 25, 27, 31, 36	Large, broad, dark green leaves with smooth edges.
	Savannah	35	1/2 oz	27, 32, 33	Early maturing, tendergreen type, slower to bolt, smooth, dark green leaves, multiple harvests.
	Florida Broadleaf	45	1/2 oz	2, 5, 6, 32	Mild-flavored, large, broad, green leaves.
	Red Giant	45, 75	1/2 oz	3, 5, 25, 32, 33	Fast-maturing, savoyed, dark red leaves with light green undersides.

Sources

For a list of sources referred to by number, request FSA6106, *Seed Sources: Vegetable and Herb*, for current address, telephone and web site.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What causes flowers to develop on my spring mustard?

- A. Mustard is a cool-season vegetable that naturally flowers during the long, warm days of summer. Pull the spring planting when hot weather arrives and before flower stalks develop.

Q. Why do mustard greens sometimes have a strong, bitter flavor?

- A. Mustard greens should mature under cool temperatures to produce high-quality, tasty leaves. Conditions such as high temperature, low moisture, low fertility or general poor growing conditions often cause an off-flavor.

Q. What do I do about the green worms feeding on my mustard?

- A. Several kinds of larvae feed on mustard. Most can be controlled with Sevin or naled. If the larvae move with a "looping" action, you probably have cabbage loopers and should use *Bacillus thuringiensis* to control this pest.

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