

## Home Gardening Series

# Kohlrabi

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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, gongylodes* 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*, which was written in 749 A.D. 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

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.

#### Harvesting

Kohlrabi has the best and mildest flavor (resembling mild white turnips) when it is small. Unfortunately, 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.

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## Cultivars

Crop	Variety	Days to Maturity	Seed/ 100 Ft of Row	Sources (see "Sources" paragraph below)	Remarks
Kohlrabi	Grand Duke Hybrid	50	1/8 oz	5, 22, 27, 32	AAS-A vigorous, productive hybrid; produces smooth, pale green bulbs.
	Early White Vienna	55	1/8 oz	2, 5, 6, 22, 23, 27, 32	Dwarf plants, white fleshed bulbs with pale green skin.
	Winner	57	1/8 oz	32	Heavier yielding than Grand Duke, pale green bulb.
	Rapidstar	49	1/8 oz	32	Large, early, slow bolting, good taste.
	Express Forcer	42	1/8 oz	27	Compact plants. Tender bulbs, tolerant of heat.

## 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 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. Harvest when slightly larger than a golf ball.

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