



COMMUNITY GARDEN TO KITCHEN SERIES

All about Kohlrabi

Brassica oleracea

A biennial plant, flowering and seeding in the second season.

Brassica oleracea var. gongyloides is, as the name suggests, a member of the Brassicaceae family - the cabbage tribe - and so is a heavy feeder. Add plenty of rich compost or dig in a green manure before planting. Kohlrabi prefers neutral to slightly alkaline soil, so dust the soil with dolomite lime or wood ash saved from the winter fire if your soil is acidic. About a handful to a sq.metre should do the trick.

Kohlrabi don't take up as much space as cabbage or cauliflower so plant about 15 to 20cm apart and between rows.

Well nourished plants develop stems 5 to 10cm in diameter in around 10 weeks. Avoid allowing plants to become too big or the stems may become woody. Leaves and leaf stalks can be harvested at any stage, but continuous defoliation will slow development of the stem

If plants do not appear to be growing rapidly, check that the soil pH is neutral to slightly alkaline. If the pH does not need adjusting, your plants may just be hungry. Apply some well-decomposed manure around the root zone of each plant and apply liquid seaweed or fish fertiliser on a regular basis. Kohlrabi suffers from the same chewing pests as other brassicas but if you are growing your kohlrabi for the stem rather than the foliage, a few chewed leaves don't matter. If chewing pests get out of control try an organic molasses spray

Keep kohlrabi well watered in dry weather and control caterpillars, slugs and snails. Remove weeds and don't cover the exposed stem with soil.

Molasses Spray

Dissolve one tablespoon of molasses in a litre of warm water. Add a teaspoon of liquid soap (dish washing liquid is ideal) to help the mixture stick.

Spray regularly over the leaves of all plants attacked by caterpillars and other chewing pests.

Caterpillars would rather starve than eat leaves sprayed with this mixture

If molasses is unavailable, chilli or garlic sprays work just as well.

Like all brassica, kohlrabi is promiscuous and will cross-pollinate readily with other species of this group that happen to be flowering at the same time. It is therefore imperative that kohlrabi is isolated from broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale or related plants that are flowering at the same time in order to preserve the purity of your seed. You will need to allow several plants to go to flower to ensure cross-pollination between kohlrabi plants and maintain adequate biological diversity in the resultant seed.

Purple types are hardier for autumn and winter crops. Try early purple, purple Vienna or white Vienna.



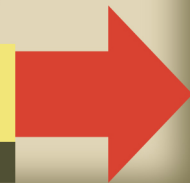
Quick Facts

- * Sow seeds from February until May
- * Full sun
- * Neutral soil (add dolomite or wood ash)
- * Keep well-watered
- * Harvest in 8- 10 weeks

Cabbage-moth can be deterred by a pair of white "butterfly-wings" made of card/plastic/an old ice-cream lid; attach with a tack to the end of a stick sunk into the ground near your brassica. Cabbage-moths are territorial and generally won't come to a plant if it is already "owned".

But Wait, there's more!

A PUBLICATION BY THE MERINO FOOD GROUP





All about Kohlrabi *Brassica oleracea*

COMMUNITY GARDEN TO KITCHEN SERIES

Nutrition Facts

Nutritional value per 100g raw

Energy 113 kJ (27 kcal)

Carbohydrates 6.2 g

Sugars 2.6 g

Dietary fiber 3.6 g

Fat 0.1 g

Protein 1.7 g

Thiamine (B1) (4%) 0.05 mg

Riboflavin (B2) (2%) 0.02 mg

Niacin (B3) (3%) 0.4 mg

Pantothenic acid (B5) (3%)

0.165 mg

Vitamin B6 (12%) 0.15 mg

Folate (B9) (4%) 16 µg

Vitamin C (75%) 62 mg

Vitamin E (3%) 0.48 mg

Calcium (2%) 24 mg

Iron (3%) 0.4 mg

Magnesium (5%) 19 mg

Manganese (7%) 0.139 mg

Phosphorus (7%) 46 mg

Potassium (7%) 350 mg

Sodium (1%) 20 mg

~USDA Database

Quinoa Stuffed Kohlrabi over Lemon-Rosemary Bechamel Stuffed Kohlrabi

- 2 kohlrabi
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup sweet onion, diced
- 1/2 cup cherry tomato, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Lemon-Rosemary Bechamel

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- lemon peel from 1/2 lemon

Peel kohlrabi using knife or vegetable peeler to remove the tough outer skin. Then, slice kohlrabi bulbs in half and use a melon-baller to carve out the center. Place kohlrabi halves in a pot of boiling water and boil until just tender (20-30 min). Set aside on paper towel to dry.

In a separate pot, boil quinoa with 1 tbsp rosemary and vegetable broth. When the quinoa is done (you'll see what looks like a little white thread coming from each grain), set aside.

Preheat oven to 180C

Using 1 tsp olive oil, cook onions and carrots until onions are translucent and carrots are tender. Add garlic and cook for another minute.

Add tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes are warm. Combine 1 cup quinoa with vegetable mixture and lemon juice. Add salt and pepper to taste. (What's left over, you can serve on the side!)

Fill tender kohlrabi halves with quinoa mixture and place on a baking sheet. Bake at 220C for 20-30 minutes (until kohlrabi is almost soft, but still holds its shape).

While kohlrabi is baking, prepare the bechamel: melt 2tbsp butter in a medium sauce pan; add 2tbsp flour; combine with a whisk. Add salt. Stir occasionally over low heat for 4-5 minutes. Slowly add 1 cup milk, stirring to combine. (Don't worry if it starts to look chunky, just keep stirring!). When milk is entirely added, place rosemary and lemon peel in saucepan with milk.

After about two minutes, add lemon juice, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened to your liking.

Remove rosemary & lemon peel.

Serve kohlrabi halves over bechamel and enjoy

Nutritionally similar to other members of the cabbage family, kohlrabi is an excellent source of vitamin C, especially when eaten raw. Young leaves can be sliced thinly for use in coleslaw and the grated stem used raw in salads. The leaves and leaf stalks can be added to soups, stir fried or substituted in most recipes requiring cabbage. Try boiling the swollen stem with the skin on, then peel, chop and serve with a little butter and freshly cracked pepper. You can stir-fry partially boiled cubes of kohlrabi with a little garlic or use in soups, curries and casseroles.

Kohlrabi, like other members of the Brassica family, contains health-promoting phytochemicals such as isothiocyanates, sulforaphane, and indole-3-carbinol that are supposed to protect against prostate and colon cancers.

It especially contains good amounts of many B-complex groups of vitamins such as niacin, vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine), thiamin, pantothenic acid, etc., that acts as co-factors to enzymes during various metabolism inside the body.

Notably good levels of minerals; copper, calcium, potassium, manganese, iron, and phosphorus are especially available in the stem. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure by countering effects of sodium. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase.

But Wait, there's more!

