

Cultural Details: **Calabrese/Broccoli**

This is a confusing series of plants, divided up as follows:

Sprouting Broccoli has mainly small, purple heads which mature slowly and can occupy the ground for almost a year. See the catalogue for cropping times per variety.

Varieties listed in the Moles catalogue under Calabrese are smaller, compact types, producing larger crowns (depending on crop density- see crop spacing). The area down to Calabrese production has expanded rapidly in recent years. Most 'broccoli' sold in the supermarkets is actually calabrese not broccoli.

Sprouting Broccoli

Sow mid April to end May to plant out in June/July in modules or blocks. For early production, sow March for planting April to harvest in November. For direct sowing, sow April to mid June for harvesting January to May. Expected germination time 7-12 days, depending on soil temperature.

The crop requires a fertile, deep, firm soil which is free-draining but water-retentive. Optimum pH is 6.5. Avoid shallow, sandy soils, and exposed sites. Plant spacing is between 60x60 and 76x60 cm.

Calabrese

For large crowns, sow end March to mid July in blocks or modules, for harvesting July to September. For direct sowing, sow from April to June. Do not use bare root transplants, as they are prone to bolt. Spacing between 30x30 and 40x60cm.

For smaller crowns suitable for freezing, sow March to mid May direct-drilled to harvest June to September. Early crops can be enhanced with the aid of crop covers. Expected germination time 7-10 days depending on soil temperatures. Spacing 30x10cm.

Cut the main crown when in tight bud. Sideshoots will subsequently develop. Lower crop density gives a longer period of harvest, as more secondary heads are produced. The heads must be cut whilst in tight bud; once per week in cool weather, and twice a week is essential in warm weather.

Pests and diseases to look out for

Club root, Soft rot, Canker, Whiptail, Downy mildew, Aphids, Caterpillars, Cabbage rootfly, Pollen beetle, Flea beetle.

In general, being a shorter-term crop, calabrese is less likely to be troubled by aphids or caterpillars. Sprouting broccoli crops may be damaged by Pigeons over the winter.

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.