

# Asian Vegetables

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## **Fast facts:**

In Washington State, agricultural production and acreage statistics are not reported for Asian vegetables.

## **Description of crop:**

Asian immigrants have brought many of their traditional vegetables to the United States. Many can be grown in Washington State and offer alternative vegetable crops for production and new marketing potential for growers. Most of the Asian vegetables grown here are used for fresh markets and generally American consumers are not familiar with these crops. Growers often have to offer instructions and recipes on how to prepare them. Items like the bitter melons need special preparations to make them palatable. If a customer prepares them incorrectly they may not purchase them again. Many of these vegetables belong to a wide range of plant families including legumes, cole crops, cucurbits and others. Most of the Asian vegetables are crops whose quality can decline under adverse weather conditions. Growers need to make sure they are harvesting at the right stage and size to know when their flavor is best. Many of these crops have different names depending upon the language used. Some of the common Asian vegetables include: edamame, Chinese white cabbage, Napa cabbage, Chinese flowering cabbage, Chinese broccoli, bamboo shoots, pea shoots, black fungus, bean sprouts, daikon radish, Thai eggplant, yard long bean, winged bean, mizuna, bok choy, Chinese celery cabbage, water chestnuts, Asian melons, luffas, and straw mushrooms. Many of these crops have good health and nutritional benefits. In 2002 and 2003 WSU Vegetable Research and Extension program in Vancouver, Washington conducted trials of 30 Asian vegetable crops to determine information on crop suitability and productivity in the state. Their row crops included choys, flowering brassicas, and Chinese cabbage. Trellised crops included Asian melon and luffas. All were planted in the spring for summer production. Row crops were better suited for spring and fall production and the trellised crops were best suited for summer production and tend to be long season.

## **Key pests:**

In the WSU test plots most of the Asian vegetable row crops were brassicas and the primary pest issue was flea beetle. They cause damage to leaves, reduce plant vigor and growth. Weeds are generally a pest in these crops and controls include hand weeding, cultivation, and mulches. Many

diseases that affect Asian vegetables can be seed borne and the treatment of seed may reduce their incidence.

**Key pesticides:**

The selection of pest and weed control products available is limited. Very few chemical herbicides are labeled specifically for these crops. Pest management strategies developed for similar crops may be helpful. Crop rotation of at least 3 years is recommended for most of these crops.

**Critical pest**

**Control issues:**

For herbicide recommendations growers can contact their local Extension agent. Some Asian vegetables have disease resistant varieties that growers should choose. Most of these crops are not frost hardy so growers need to adjust planting times to fit the climate at their location. For some of these crops bolting resistant varieties are also available. Growers can control virus disease vectors such as aphids and control and remove weeds that can be hosts for viral disease.



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