

# Bok choy

---

*Brassica rapa* spp. *chinensis* L. (Brassica)

## Fast facts:

Acres in Washington: less than 100 Number of growers: less than 20
---

## Description

### Of crop:

Bok choy is a non-heading type of cabbage. It is sometimes called Chinese cabbage, pak choy, celery mustard, Chinese chard and spoon cabbage. Bok choy looks more like white Swiss chard, with dark green leaves and succulent white midribs starting from a bulbous base. Its leaves are cupped or spoon shaped and it is often associated with Chinese cuisine. Bok choy is used in stir-fries, soups, and salads or eaten raw. It is a cool season crop and care should be taken when harvesting not to crack the ribs. It is relatively hardy but consistent hot temperatures above 75°F can cause tip burn. The heads are harvested by cutting the head off at the ground. Bok choy is generally started indoors and transplanted in the spring. It needs a quick start and consistent cool weather or it bolts. Bok choy is grown on limited acreage in Washington where it is produced for the farmers market.

## Key pests:

The key insect pests of bok choy in western Washington are the flea beetle, cabbage looper and armyworm. Bok choy that is severely damaged by insects is usually unmarketable. The weed pests that affect bok choy in western Washington include, pigweed, lambsquarter, and purslane. Diseases are not an issue. In eastern Washington the weed pests are Russian thistle, pigweed, purslane, barnyardgrass, and kochia. Both insects and diseases are not pests.

## Key pesticides:

The flea beetle, cabbage looper and armyworm are controlled with Ambush. Chemical control can be difficult for some weeds since they belong to the same family as bok choy (Brassicaceae). Weeds are controlled with Treflan. In eastern Washington weed control is achieved through hand hoeing.

## Critical

### Pest issues:

Parasitic wasps can be used to control cabbage loopers. Growers need to be careful with any insecticide treatments to make sure they don't decrease the beneficial insect populations. If growing organically, row covers can prove effective in controlling pest problems. Growers need to control weeds that not

only compete with bok choy but which also act as a host for insect pests. Herbicides and spray drift can cause injury to bok choy if not applied correctly. Crop rotation should be utilized and bok choy should be disked under following its final harvest to kill any flea beetle larvae in the soil.

**Expert contacts:**

Dr. Carol Miles  
WSU Mount Vernon Northwestern  
Washington Research and Extension Center  
16650 SR 536  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-9761  
360 848-6150

Dr. Alan Schreiber  
2621 Ringold Rd  
Eltopia, Wa 99330  
509 266 4348

**Location**

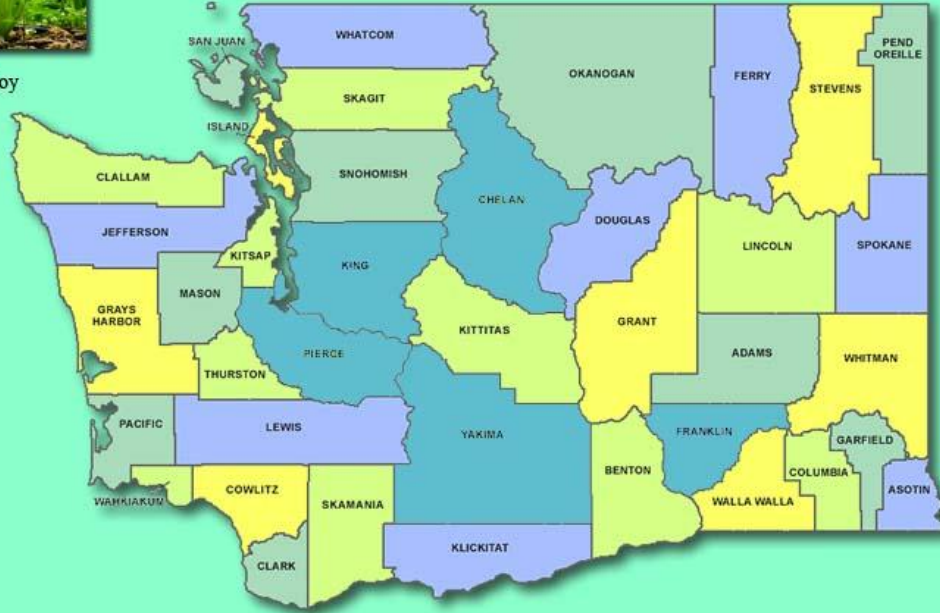
**Of production:**

In eastern Washington: Yakima, and Franklin counties. In western Washington: King, Pierce and Chelan counties.



Bok Choy

## Bok Choy Production in Washington State



■ Area of Bok Choy Production



