

# Broccoli Raab Seed

*Brassica campestris* (Cruciferae)

## Fast Facts:

Acres in Washington: fewer than 20
Percent Acre Value: \$1000-\$1200
Value of Production in Washington: \$20,000-\$24,000
Number of Growers: 5 to 10

## Description of crop:

Broccoli raab is consumed for the leaves and young flower buds. It is used in a manner similar to spinach. Washington produces most, if not all, of the broccoli raab seed in the United States. The seed crop is direct-seeded in early April and harvested in early September. The crop is hoed to remove weeds and rogued to remove plants not displaying true varietal characteristics. At harvest, the crop is cut, windrowed and dried in the field for 10 to 14 days. After drying, the crop is combined, and the seed is sent to a conditioning plant, where it is cleaned to 99% purity.

## Key pests:

Severe insect pests include cabbage aphid, turnip aphid, seedpod weevil and cabbage maggot. Other insect pests include cabbage looper, springtails, webworms, diamondback moth, cutworms, symphylans, and wireworms. Weed pests include shepherdspurse, mustards, lambsquarter, pigweeds, smartweed, henbit, groundsel, chickweed, wild turnip, quackgrass, wild oat, Canada thistle, bolt thistle, vetch, nightshades and bed straw. Shepherdspurse is one of the more problematic weeds. Weeds are serious pests due to two issues. The seeds that the weeds produce are often very difficult to sort out of the seed crop. If the contaminating seeds are too costly or impossible to sort out, the seed crop is considerably host for insects and diseases. The most serious diseases are powdery mildew, downy mildew, *Alternaria* black spot and white mold (*Sclerotinia sclerotium*). Additional diseases of concern are powdery mildew, downy mildew, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pythium* and *Phytophthora*. Birds such as starlings and robins are also major pests.

## Key pesticides:

Lorsban and Pounce/Ambush are used for insect control, and endosulfan is applied mid-bloom to control seedpod weevil, cabbage maggot, cutworm and loopers. Trifluralin is used prior to planting to control the broadleaf weeds, and Fusilade is applied occasionally after harvest to control grasses. Poast also controls grass weeds. Cultural practices including long rotation periods to reduce inoculum levels to help Control *Alternaria* black spot and white mold. Boscalid and cyprodinil + fludioxonil are

also used for white mold. Mefenoxam, metalaxyl and cymoxanil controls downy mildew. Azoxystrobin and pyraclostrobin are used to control powdery mildew, Alternaria black spot and white mold. Mancozeb and chlorothalonil are used for general disease control.

**Critical pest control issues:**

The loss of dimethoate was significant. Mitigation to comply with urbanization, salmon and water buffer issues are expensive. The profit margin is quite narrow on small seeded vegetable crops. It is critical that growers maintain efficacious and economical herbicides. If the margin is reduced by higher weed control costs, higher sorting costs or lower value due to weed seed contamination the result could be economic loss to the grower.

**Expert contacts:**

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**Location**

**of production:** Broccoli raab seed is produced in Skagit and Snohomish Counties

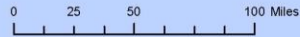


Broccoli Raab (Rapini)  
(Photo courtesy of NCSU)

## Broccoli Raab Seed Production in Washington State



Deborah Bahs - April 2007



### Counties Producing Broccoli Raab Seed\*

\* Includes only those counties with significant crop acres.  
The crop may also be produced in counties not highlighted on the map.