

# Canola seed

---

*Brassica napus* (Cruciferae)

## Fast facts:

Acres in Washington: 1635 Number of Growers: less than 10
--

## Description

### Of crop:

Canola was developed in Canada and is a cultivar of rapeseed. It is a broadleaf plant that is a member of the mustard family. It is an annual dry land crop that produces yellow flowers and long thin pods. Pods are 1-3 inches long and contain 15-40 small round seeds. The main stem can reach 4-5 feet in height with bright yellow flowers forming at the tips of the branches. Canola oil is squeezed from the seeds with forty percent of the seed weight being oil. Canola seed easily over winters and can remain in the ground up to four years. Canola can be seeded and harvested with small grain farming equipment, provided that adjustments are made to accommodate the small seed size. It can be harvested with a conventional combine or it can be swathed and windrowed. Swathing seems to reduce green seed problems and reduces seed shatter losses. The color of the seed is the best indicator in determining maturity. Canola is used for food and has a strong demand as a healthy vegetable cooking oil. The part of the seed left after the oil is extracted is called meal and can be fed to livestock. It can also be used in biodiesel production consequently; there is an interest in Washington State for increased canola production. In western Washington high value vegetable seed crop growers are concerned with nearby canola crops. They are concerned that the canola crops will cross-pollinate with their crops since it outcross readily with other brassica crops. In addition to outcropping concerns, canola seed crops can also vector diseases and insects that may increase risks to specialty seed crops. As a result, a law was enacted that authorizes the Washington State Department of Agriculture to establish *Brassica* seed production districts. In Washington, most canola is grown only for its oil, not to produce seed for next year's crop. Most producers grow under contract, using specified seed varieties and operating for a fixed return.

### Key pests:

Key pests are the cabbage flea beetle, which invades seedling canola from grasses and surrounding vegetations. The over wintering flea beetles will feed on the newly emerged seedlings and can reduce yields. They seldom invade canola fields further than 50 feet from the edge of the field so some growers double seed this area. The seedpod weevil and the cabbage aphid are also serious pests. Canola seedlings are also sensitive to early weed competition. Weed pests include

lambquarter, pigweed, mayweed, knapweed and various grasses. Wild mustard is a serious seed contaminant in canola and can cause price discounts or rejection in the market.

**Key pesticides:**

The cabbage flea beetle is controlled with a seed treatment of Helix. The cabbage seedpod weevil and aphids are controlled with Capture. Most growers use the Roundup Ready canola so weeds are not a problem. Trifluralin and Sonalan are preplant soil incorporated herbicides that are labeled for weeds in canola. They will control annual grasses, pigweed, lambquarter, and kochia. Wild mustards will not be controlled.

**Critical pest**

**Control issues:**

Growers should use only certified seed. Most diseases are managed through seed treatment. Canola seed is prone to seed shatter and the persistence of herbicide residue remaining from application prior to growing canola can injure new canola seedlings. Canola is a shallow seeded crop so care needs to be taken when hoeing for weed control.

**Expert contacts:**

Howard Nelson  
Central Washington Grain Growers  
509 647 5395

Dr. Ann Hang  
WSU-IAREC  
24106 N. Bunn Rd  
Prosser, WA 99350  
509 786 9201

Gaylin Davies  
McKay Seed Company, Inc  
2945 Rd N  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
509 766 9894

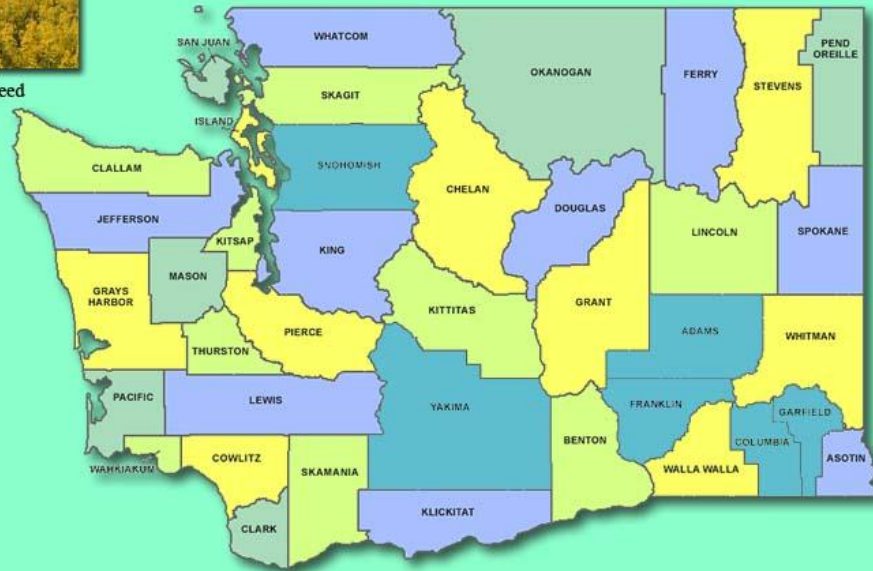
**Location**

**Of production:** Adams, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Snohomish, and Yakima

# Canola Seed Production in Washington State



Canola Seed



■ Area of Canola Seed Production