

Chinese Cabbage (Napa Cabbage)

Brassica rapa (Cruciferae)

Fast Facts: Acres in Washington: 150
Number of Growers: 50-75
Per Acre Value: \$1800-\$4500
Percent of U.S. Acreage: less than 1%

Description

Of crop:

Chinese cabbage also known as snow cabbage or napa cabbage, is a leafy vegetable commonly used in Chinese cuisine. The vegetable is closely related to the Western cabbage and is of the same species as the common turnip. Chinese cabbage grows best in cool, moist environments. Plants can be direct seeded or planted from transplants. Since Chinese cabbage is a short-season crop, it can be planted in early spring for harvest in midsummer or planted in August for October and November harvest. In western Washington, midsummer plantings are common, since the late season helps avoid many common pests. Planting too early in the spring may cause premature seed stalk development (bolting). Bolting occurs when temperatures are too cold. Bolting resistant varieties, however are available for early planting (mid-April rather than late May). The general growth habit of Chinese cabbage is similar to cabbage, but the heads and leaves of the Chinese cabbage are elongated and relatively narrow. The head of a Chinese cabbage is less densely packed and the leaves are much thinner than in cabbage.

There are many kinds of Chinese cabbages that are grouped based on size, shape, heading and non-heading. There are two distinctly different types of *Brassica rapa*; the Pekinensis and the Chinesis and there are a wide range of varieties within both groups. The Pekinensis is the more common of the two and have cabbages with broad green leaves, white petioles, tightly wrapped cylindrical formation and a more compact head. The Chinensis varieties do not form heads; instead they have smooth, dark green leaf blades forming a cluster similar to celery.

In Washington, Chinese cabbage is harvested by hand and is grown mainly for local and farmers markets.

Key pests:

The biggest pest problem in Chinese cabbage is the cabbage looper, cabbage aphid and turnip aphid. Weed pests are: shepardspurse, lambsquarter, pigweed, annual grasses and wild mustard. Wild mustard is especially difficult to control due to the fact that any herbicide that affects it will also affect Chinese cabbage. The major diseases pest is

downy mildew. This is a foliar disease, which is a fungus that primarily occurs in cool, moist weather.

Key Pesticides:

For control of the cabbage loopers, growers use Ambush or Pounce. For aphids growers can apply dimethoate. For most weeds, growers use Treflan. Downy mildew can be controlled with Apron.

Critical pest

Control issues:

Growers need to remember that while most of the same sprays used on cabbage are also used for Chinese cabbage there is a difference in their harvesting styles. Cabbage is usually harvested at head stage while Chinese cabbage is cut and then grows again. Growers may need to reapply sprays. It is necessary to find more effective and cheaper fungicides for farmers to control downy mildew. Growers should plant resistant varieties when available. It is also important to maintain good sanitation practices especially in the destruction of any plant material that shows signs of disease. Rotation programs need to be rigorously followed. This usually involves choosing an area where cruciferous crops have not been grown before.

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Location

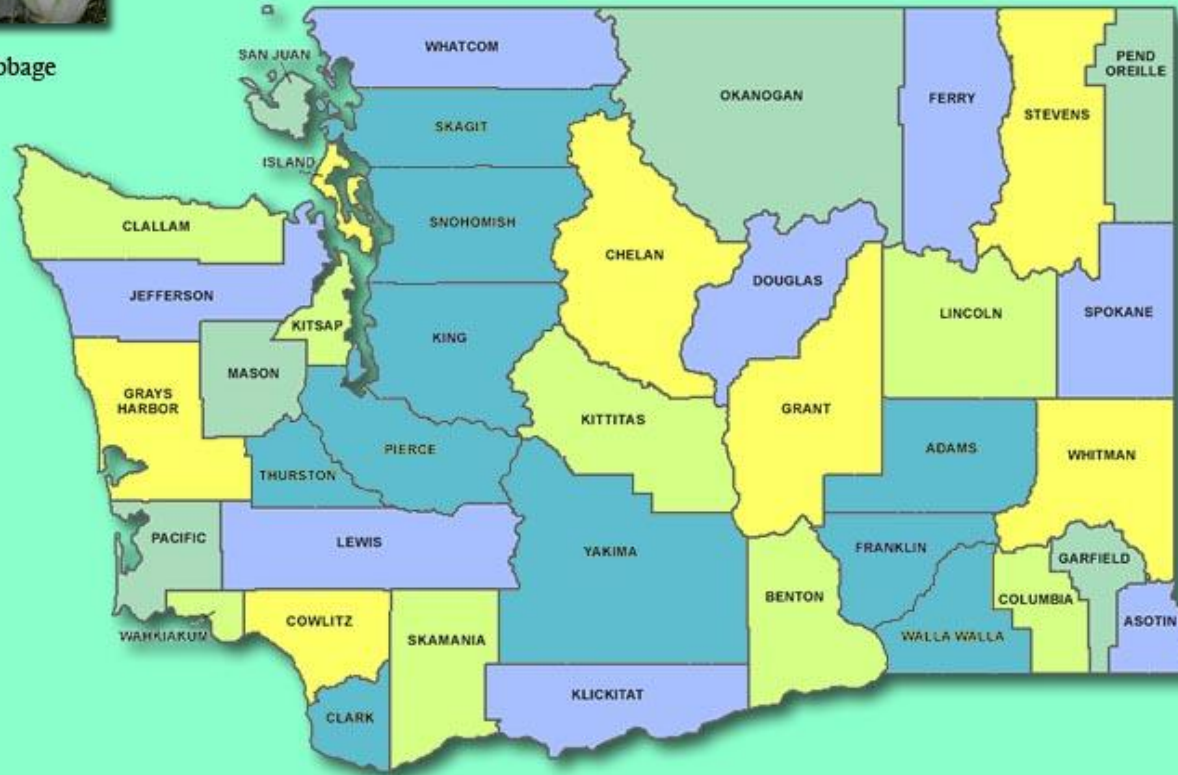
Of production:

Eastern Washington: Adams, Franklin, Yakima, and Walla Walla Counties. Western Washington: Clark, King, Pierce, Skagit, Thurston and Snohomish counties. |



Chinese Cabbage

Chinese Cabbage Production in Washington State



■ Area of Chinese Cabbage Production

