

Collards

Brassica oleracea (Cruciferae)

Fast Facts:

Acres in Washington: less than 20 acres Per Acre Value: \$1000 Value of Production in Washington; \$20,000 Number of Growers: 30 to 40

Description of crop:

Collards are similar in many respects to kales, differing in little more than the forms of their leaves. Although they share the same botanical name as kale, collards have their own distinctive qualities. Like kale, collards are one of the non-head forming members of the *Brassica* family along with broccoli and cauliflower. The dark blue-green leaves that are smooth in texture and relatively broad distinguish them from the frilly edged leaves of kale. Collards, usually used in plural, is a corruption of coleworts or colewyrts, an Anglo-Saxon terms literally meaning cabbage plants. Collards were the first domesticated kale. Thick-leaved, dense, and cabbage-like in flavor, collards are sturdier and stronger than most kales. All varieties of collards appear rather similar, but the kales show interesting diversity: tall and short; highly curled and plain leaved; blue-green, yellow-green, and red; erect and flat-growing; in various combinations and gradations of these characters.

Collards are grown for its thick, tender leaves used for greens. Collards are seeded started in April, sometimes before frosts have passed. Harvests last from between 6 to 10 weeks. Leaves are hand harvest about two times per week, leaving the central stem to continue growing. In Washington, collards are marketed as a fresh greens. The perishability of the crop allows it to be held between 10 to 14 days after harvest.

All collards grown in Washington are produced for local consumption, usually for farmers markets and roadside stands. Most collards in Washington are consumed by those of southern U.S. origins.

Key pests:

Turnip and cabbage aphid are the most significant insect pests. Cabbage looper, diamondback moth and other foliar feeding lepidopterous pests are frequently a problem later in the season. Diseases are not a problem. Weeds can be a serious problem early in the season. A mature collard plant can out compete most weeds.

Key pesticides:

Treflan is used preplant. Most weed control post plant is by hand.

Critical pest control issues:

Collards are grown on minimal acreage, which allows many growers to control pests by hand. Due to short harvest intervals, application of most pesticides is

very limited. A Franklin County collard grower controls aphids with spinosad and aphids with azadiractin.

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**Location
of production:**

Clark, Lewis, Yakima, Franklin, Skagit, Snohomish, King, Pierce and Thurston counties.

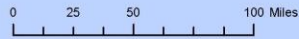


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Collard Production in Washington State



Deborah Bahs - April 2007



Counties Producing Collard* (ranked by acres in production)

- Commercial crop only
- Commercial & market crop

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