

# December's Harvest Spotlight: KALE

Part of the brassica plant family that includes collards, kohlrabi, broccoli and cabbage. Kale is a dark leafy green that's become increasingly popular and more mainstream in American diets. Kale was first cultivated in the Mediterranean and was considered a staple food during Roman times because of its ability to withstand cold and provide nutrition in winter months.

## Fun Facts

- A serving of kale has more calcium than a carton of milk.
- Kale gets sweet once it's been through cold winter temperatures.
- Some kale varieties have been cultivated just for ornamental purposes (i.e., to make the garden look nice!)
- In Germany there are annual Grünkohlfahrt tours to celebrate and eat lots of kale!
- In parts of Scotland the term "come to kale" means come to dinner, and to be "off one's kale" means someone is ill.

## Benefits

Kale is considered a superfood because its dark leaves pack in a lot of vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin A, C, & K.

## Kid Friendly Eating Tips

- Raw kale, thinly sliced, can be added to soups, pastas, veggie hashes, and frittatas.
- Have kids help make a kale salad by putting kale and dressing ingredients in a ziplock bag and massaging and shaking to make leaves more tender.

### Varieties



Red Russian:  
Ruffled leaves  
but with red or  
purple stems



Lacinato (Dinosaur  
or Tuscan):  
Dark green tender  
leaves that are  
long and narrow;  
a popular variety  
to use for raw  
preparations



Curly:  
The most common  
variety; has bright  
curly leaves that  
crisp up nicely when  
sautéed.

Siberian:  
Ruffled green leaves;  
is best when cooked

## Storage Tips

Store in a refrigerator in a plastic bag for 5–10 days. It's helpful to have a towel in the bag to absorb any moisture.

## Cooking Tips

- Remove the center rib of kale, as it is tough, by gripping the end and pulling downward with your other hand. This strips just the leaf from the stem.
- Massage kale for raw preparations.
- Kale Chips - (1) strip leaves from stem (2) tear into 2 to 3 inch bite size pieces (3) lightly toss kale with olive oil, salt, and any additional spices in a large bowl being sure each leaf is evenly coated (4) spread kale leaves evenly in a single layer on rimmed baking sheets, being sure not to crowd leaves (5) bake at 325° for 10 – 12 minutes or until leaves are crisp and bright green (6) let cool for 2 minutes then transfer to a serving dish (or cool pan)

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## Gardening Tips

You can find kale seeds at Angie's produce on Hwy 8 and most grocery stores this time of year. Angie's Produce has a helpful staff if you need assistance in choosing seeds! For gardening tips on growing kale see "Everything You Need to Know about Growing Kale" by Burpee Gardens: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KvWqbjJ2cng>

# Bell Sprouts Garden December Newsletter

We had a hot September and October, which delayed planting most of our cool season crops until the end of October and the first part of November. The delay did not stop us from great harvests this past month! Our students have enjoyed a variety of radishes, lettuce, salad greens, kale, and mustard greens! We hope to enjoy the remainder of our crops (like carrots, beets, turnips, and broccoli) when we return from holiday break.

## What's Growing? Cool Season Crops:

Arugula	Beets	Brussel Sprouts
Broccoli	Bunching Onions	
Cabbage	Carrots	Cauliflower
Kale	Mustard Greens	
Lettuce	Radishes	Salad Blends
Spinach	Swiss Chard	Turnip Greens
Turnips	Walla Walla Onions	
White Icicle Radishes		



## Quotes from our Students: Gardening Tips and Benefits

Daniela Dahman (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) "You don't have to spend that much money. Also it is fresh from a garden and it's fun to grow. Plus it spends more time in the grocery store so from a garden is it fresher. "

Maggie Sherwood (5<sup>th</sup> grade) "To make a good garden you would need a lot of things to do that. First, you would need to water it every day and make sure it gets enough sunlight. Next, check on your plants every day to make sure they are ok. Finally, make sure animals are not eating the plants and also don't pick them too early. I want a garden to eat things fresh. Also, I can pick what I want to plant. "

### THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF GARDENING

#### Stress Relief



Gardening can help reduce the level of stress hormone Cortisol

#### Immunity Booster



Direct exposure to dirt and plants can help boost your immune system

#### Work Out



3 hours of moderate gardening could equal a 1 hour gym session

#### Bacteria Friends



Soil contains a natural antidepressant that can make us happier

#### Green Diet



Those who grow veggies are more conscious about having a healthy diet

#### Brain Health



One study revealed that daily gardening can reduce risk of dementia by 36%

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