

How to Grow Mustards

General

Easy to grow, versatile in the kitchen, and packed with vitamins and minerals, these plants produce edible leaves and stalks and many can be grown year round. It's worth getting to know these varieties better!

Latin

Brassica juncea & *Brassica rapa*

Family: Brassicaceae

Difficulty

Easy

Season & Zone

Season: Cool-season

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Zone: Hardy in Zone 7 and up, with cloche protection, many varieties will survive for winter harvests.

Timing

Mustards are cool season plants that grow quickly and then bolt. Direct sow with frost protection as early as February or without protection from early March to the end of May. Sowing short rows every 3 weeks allows for a continuous harvest of both baby leaves and full sized plants. Sow in September for late fall and winter harvests. Optimal soil temperature: 21°C (70°F). Seeds should sprout in 5-10 days.

Starting

If growing to full size, sow 3-4 seeds in each spot you want a plant to grow. Sow 5mm-1cm (¼-½") deep and thin to the strongest plant, spaced 10-15cm (4-6") in the row. All mustards can be grown in containers for baby salad greens. Sow these as you would misticanza mixes, with seeds spaced as near as possible to 1cm (½") apart.

Growing

Ideal pH: 6.0-6.5. One cup of complete organic fertilizer will provide nutrition for 3m (10') of row. Water regularly. Expect mustards to bolt in hot weather. Provide protection in winter by using a cloche or heavy row cover. At all other times, plan on growing fast and harvesting fast, like spinach. Planting short rows every two weeks works best for the home garden for a constant harvest.

Harvest

Cut individual leaves, or the whole plant at whatever stage of maturity you desire. Young leaves tend to be more tender and less powerfully flavoured as mature leaves. Some varieties will develop a slight bitterness in fully mature leaves. The leaves can be blanched (or run through a food processor) and then frozen, or even dried and flaked for soup mixes. But the plants are so cold hardy, fresh leaves should be available to the determined gardener 12 months of the year.

Diseases & Pests

Slugs and woodlice (sow bugs) may nibble young seedlings, but overall, these plants are trouble free. Keep the garden free from debris and excess water, where both of these pests like to go during the day. If leaves show lots of tiny holes, flea beetles are the problem. Prevent early spring infestations by using lightweight row cover.



Mustards

