

Bok Choy

A Nutritious and Delicious Addition to the Cool Season Garden By Tamara Van Dee

Images from the Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds Catalog



Bok choy (白菜), a member of the Brassicaceae family, is a wonderful addition to the fall garden. Bok choy thrives in the cooler temperatures and some dwarf varieties are ready for harvest in as little as 30 days with most varieties being ready by 50 days.

This vegetable can be grown in both the spring and fall garden in Virginia. The range for germination is 50 to 80 degrees F. Direct seeding in moist, well-drained soil is recommended for fall while transplants may be used in the spring. Plant spacing varies depending on whether a dwarf or full size variety is being grown. Although it is subject to bolting, this tends to be more of an issue in the spring garden when temperatures tend to be less predictable. In the fall, it can be enjoyed until the first frost, unless a season extender is used.

There are many varieties to choose from with varying attributes. Some are selected for their resistance to bolting, while others are grown for their tolerance to heat and cold. Some extra dwarf varieties are ready to harvest for use as micro-greens in as little as 21 days. Cornell University's citizen science project, Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners has over 60 varieties identified/recommended: http://vegvariety.cce.cornell.edu/main/showVarieties.php?searchCriteria=pak+choy&searchIn=1&crop_id=0&sortBy=overallrating&order=DESC

If you are unfamiliar with this vegetable, it can be found in the Asian section of the market. It has been grown in China and other Asian countries for thousands of years and is used extensively in stir-fries, makes a tasty side dish if steamed while adding a pleasing crunch to salads when raw. Bok choy is a healthy addition to many recipes and its nutritional profile shows that it is high in Vitamins K, C and A with respectable amounts of potassium, folate and calcium.

Reference: <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene0bdf.html>

Recipes: <https://lenoir.ces.ncsu.edu/2016/05/bring-home-the-bok-choy/>