

appendix

HARVESTING & WASHING TIPS

Here you'll find guidelines on how and when to harvest the various crops mentioned in our cooking lessons. Additionally, you'll find a couple tips to help the washing process.

HARVESTING TIPS

COLLARDS

- Collards are ready to harvest when the leaves are 6-10 inches tall. Harvest earlier for "baby greens" which are more tender and milder in flavor.
- To harvest, use your thumb and fingers to snap off the leaves near the base of the stem. Don't cut the entire plant all at once. Harvest lower leaves first, so that new, younger leaves continue to grow from the center of the plant.

LETTUCE

- Heads of lettuce are ready to harvest once a firm center has developed. Best to harvest earlier than later because lettuce tends to get bitter as it matures.
- To harvest a head of lettuce, cut below the base of the head, right above the roots. Remove any damaged leaves, if needed.
- Harvest leaf lettuce as a cut-and-come-again crop. To do this, harvest a few individual leaves from the outside of each plant, leaving the youngest leaves in the center (3-4 leaves) to continue to grow.



KALE

- Kale is ready to harvest once the leaves are about 6-8 inches long. Harvest earlier for "baby greens" which are more tender and milder in flavor.
- To harvest, use your thumb and fingers to snap off the leaves near the base of the stem. Use scissors if necessary. Don't cut the entire plant all at once. Harvest lower leaves first, so that new, younger leaves continue to grow from the center of the plant.

Fun Fact: Kale flowers are edible and make a lovely addition to fresh salads.

TURNIPS

- The tops of turnips will peek out of the ground as they become ready to harvest. Use your fingers to dig around the top of the root to see the size before pulling.
- To harvest, simply pull the plant up from the soil, root and all.

KOHLRABI

- Kohlrabi is ready to harvest once the stem reaches 2-4" in diameter. The larger it gets, the woodier it may become.
- To harvest, use a knife to cut the base of the stem above the roots. The leaves and skin are both edible, but the skin can be tough, so most people peel before eating.



CHARD

- Chard is ready to harvest once the leaves are about 6-8 inches tall. Harvest earlier for “baby greens” which are more tender and milder in flavor.
- To harvest, use your thumb and fingers to snap off the leaves near the base of the stem. Use scissors if necessary. Don’t cut the entire plant all at once. Harvest lower leaves first, so that new, younger leaves continue to grow from the center of the plant.

CARROTS

- Depending on the variety, carrots are ready to harvest when their

roots are between 1/2-inch to 1-inch wide at their “shoulders”.

- Use your index finger to brush away soil from a carrot’s top to see how large the root is.
- To help prevent breakage, use a fork to loosen the soil around the roots.



SNOW PEAS

- Snow pea pods are ready to harvest when the pod has developed and is slim and tender. Harvest before the pea seeds begin to swell inside the pod. Also harvest before the pod turns yellow. Once yellow, the peas may taste bitter.
- To harvest, snap off where connected to the vine; be careful not to pull the tendrils from the trellis.

Fun Fact: Snow pea leaves, tendrils, and flowers are all edible.



SUGAR SNAP PEAS

- Sugar snap pea pods are ready to harvest once the seeds inside the pod have developed. This will look like a plump pod versus a slim pod. Also harvest before the pod turns yellow. Once yellow, the peas may taste bitter.
- To harvest, snap off where connected to the vine; be careful not to pull the tendrils from the trellis.

Fun Fact: Sugar snap pea leaves, tendrils, and flowers are all edible.

RADISHES

- Depending on the variety, radishes are ready to harvest once their root has reached about 1” in diameter. Typically, the younger the radish, the less spicy.
- To harvest radishes, simply pull the plant up from the soil, root and all.

NAPA CABBAGE

- Once a cabbage head is a desired size, use your fingers to lightly squeeze the cabbage head. If it squishes easily and feels hollow inside, it needs more time. If it feels firm and solid, then it's ready to harvest.
- Harvesting a head of cabbage can be done a couple different ways:
 - Pull the entire head out of the ground, roots and all.
 - Cut the stem right below the head – this requires a sharp knife and is best done by an adult.

CILANTRO

- Cilantro is ready to harvest once stems are 4-6 inches tall.
- To harvest, pinch the stem between your thumb and fingers ½ to 1 inch above the ground, or you can use scissors to cut several stems at once.
- To harvest the seeds to use as coriander cut the seed head off of the plant when the seeds are visible and the plant begins to turn brown. Place the seed head in a paper bag. Hang the bag until the seeds dry and fall off. Store the seeds in an airtight container.

WASHING TIPS

Before washing, remove any unnecessary roots, if still intact, and remove any outer leaves that are not edible.

Use a hose and wash table, like the one shown below, to clean multiple vegetables at once.

Alternatively set up a bucket for students to wash their own vegetable in an assembly line fashion (shown to the left). If possible, wash the vegetables with the least amount of dirt first, and so on to avoid having to replace the water as often.

