kale

Brassica oleracea

**Varieties:** Most kale varieties become sweeter in cold weather, whereas Red Russian kale becomes more tender and sweet in hot weather.

**In history:** Many varieties we eat today are the same as those cultivated 2,000 years ago by the Greeks and Romans. The original wild cabbage from which kale originates was domesticated around 2,500 years ago, and because it is so tolerant of the cold, became a staple vegetable in Eastern Europe at that time.

**Health:** Kale is loaded with a compound called xanthaxanthin which has been shown to help prevent age-related loss of vision.

**Etymology:** The word “kale” originates from the Latin caulis meaning “stem” or “stalk.”

In the garden: Kale is an adaptable veggie that can grow in soils of poorer quality, but avoid planting your kale in areas with potentially high nitrogen as it can produce soft leaves more susceptible to pest attacks. Give it a sunny spot with well-draining soil.

cabbage

**Nutrition:** Cabbage is packed with fiber, vitamin C and folate—a B vitamin known to protect heart health. One cup of raw shredded cabbage supplies about 25% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C and potassium in under 20 calories.

**About the veggie:** The cabbage family, called Brassicaceae, is extremely diverse, and includes kale, collards, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes and mustards.

**Chemistry:** The strong aromas and flavors in many members of the cabbage family are the result of chemical reactions that trigger the vegetable’s defensive system upon tissue damage. This type of chemical defense mechanism inspired the inventors of the synthetic mustard gas used in World War I.

**Etymology:** The word cabbage comes from the Latin caput meaning “head.” It is the only form of vegetable in the cabbage family that has a short stubby stem inside the head with leaves that form around it. This is different from kale and other members of this family, which have stalks that remain visible as leaves emerge.

Cabbage has been cultivated for centuries in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. According to ancient Roman mythology, cabbage originated from the sweat of Jupiter, the king of gods.

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