



Bok Choy (*Brassica rapa subsp. Chinensis*)

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Introduction to Bok Choy

Bok choy, also known as Chinese cabbage, is a leafy green vegetable that has gained popularity for its unique flavor, and versatility in culinary applications. Bok choy is a member of the Brassicaceae family, which includes cabbage, broccoli, and kale.

Bok choy has been a staple in Asian cuisines, particularly in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese cooking. Bok choy is characterized by its thick white or green stalks and dark green leaves, which are arranged in a cluster resembling a small, compact head of lettuce. There are several varieties of Bok choy, including standard Bok choy, which has broader stalks and leaves, and baby Bok choy, which is smaller and more tender. Bok choy is a notable example of an ethnic vegetable introduced to USA by Asian immigrants who brought their culinary traditions with them.

Care and Maintenance

- Water Bok choy as needed to keep soil moist but not waterlogged. Water at the base to prevent wetting the foliage, which can increase the risk of disease.
- Mulch around plants to conserve moisture.
- Apply balanced fertilizer or compost before sowing seed to provide adequate nutrition.
- Monitor Bok choy regularly for signs of pests and implement appropriate control measures.

Sources

Bok choy. (2024, June 4). In Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bok_choy

Mary H. Dyer (2022). Bok choy history and uses. <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/tbt/bok-choy-history-uses>

Steph Coelho (2024). Growing Bok Choy: The Complete Guide to Plant, Care, and Harvest Bok Choy. <https://morningchores.com/growing-bok-choy/>

Cultivation and Growing Bok Choy

- Choose a well-drained fertile soil with a pH level between 6.0 and 7.5. Container gardening is an option for small spaces.
- Incorporate organic matter or aged manure to improve soil if necessary.
- Start seeds indoor 4-6 weeks before the last frost date or sow directly into the garden at the beginning of spring once the soil can be worked.
- Plant seeds ½ inch deep and space 6-8 inches apart, rows should be spaced 12-18 inches apart.
- Germinates within 4-8 days under ideal conditions which include soil temperatures (around 50-85°F) and adequate moisture.

Harvesting and Post-Harvest Handling

- Baby Bok choy should be harvested when the plants are about 6 inches tall. Mature Bok choy plants should reach about 12-18 inches tall, and the leaves should be full sized and firm.
- To harvest whole plant, use a sharp knife or garden shears to cut plant at the base, above the soil line.
- For continuous harvest, pick individual leaves starting from the outer leaves.