

# **Flowering cabbage and kale**

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**F**lowering cabbage and kale are somewhat new plants to the Connecticut market. They are grown for their foliage which is brilliant from mid-summer to fall. These plants can be displayed in individual containers or grouped in a plant bed to provide late season color. In protected locations they will overwinter. The cabbage has the typical rounded leaf while the kale has the deeply cut leaves.

Plants for fall sale should be sown between July 10 and 30 or four to six weeks prior to sale for all paks, and 12 to 14 weeks prior to sale for 6 to 8 inch pots.

Germination usually takes 10 to 12 days at 68°F. High medium temperature inhibits germination. Do not allow seedlings to dry out. Growing temperature should be 60-70°F days. Seedlings should be transplanted into 1206 cell pak (2 1/4" cells) or similar size containers. When they are well rooted, shift them into 6 or 8 inch pans. The pans should be grown in full sun, spaced at 16 to 18 inch centers to allow for maximum plant development. If grown outdoors, be sure to place pots on weed barrier to control weeds and keep plants free of dirt.

Fertilization should be at 200 ppm nitrogen from 20-20-20 constant feed during the growing period. About one month before sale, switch to a low-nitrogen or pot mum special. Slow-release fertilizer can also be used. Do not allow plants to dry out. This can be fatal if it happens too often.

Problem insects are cabbage worms and aphids. Cabbage worms can be controlled by spraying every 5 to 7 days with Dipel insecticide, while aphids can be controlled with sprays of diazinon or malathion as needed.

Soil diseases can be controlled with applications of Subdue (1 oz./100 gal water).

Ornamental cabbage and kale offer the customer alternatives for fall planting. They are relatively easy to grow and can be profitable items if marketed as new or unusual garden plants.

## **References:**

Villeneuve, Robert. May 1989 *PPGA News Ornamental Cabbage and Kale From a Growers Point of View*. Vol. XX. No. 5 p. 2.

Editor *Tennessee Flower Growers Newsletter*, vol. 3. No. 6, June 1989.