



Broccoli



Fact Sheet

Where did it come from?

Broccoli can be traced back 2000 years and has been grown in United States for over 200 years. Broccoli was one of the ancient Romans favorite foods. They introduced this vegetable to France in the 1500's and to England in 1720.

Broccoli was first grown in Calabria, an Italian province and was given the name Calabrese. Later the vegetable was given the name broccoli, which comes from the Latin word *brachium*, which means branch or arm. The first broccoli showed up in markets in the United States in the early 1900's. By 1925, broccoli became a popular vegetable across the nation.



Where does it grow?

Broccoli is grown in many states throughout the country. States that produce produce broccoli, include Washington, Maine, Wisconsin, Ohio, Colorado, Oregon, Texas and Florida. California produces 90% of all broccoli grown in the United States. Broccoli is grown in Salinas Valley and Santa Maria Valley in California from March through December and grown in the Yuma Valley in Arizona from November to March. Broccoli is available all year long but is most abundant in October through May.





How does it grow?

Broccoli is generally grown from seeds planted in fields. It is ready to pick in approximately 80-120 days. A bunch of broccoli grows in the middle of several leaves. Sometimes these leaves are still attached to the broccoli when you buy it in the store. It usually grows close to the ground, but if it has excellent growing conditions the plant can grow 2-3 feet tall! It grows best in cool weather and can even grow with light frost. Soil, which is fertile and well drained, will promote the growth of broccoli. While the flowers are still compact, the broccoli heads are harvested. After broccoli is picked it is very important that it is kept cold. A liquid ice treatment reduces the broccoli's temperature to 35° F within 3-5 minutes. Broccoli is packed in the field and quickly transported to markets.

Is it healthy?

-  Rich in calcium, folate, potassium, vitamin C and A
-  Good source of fiber

How do you pick a good one?

-  Choose bunches whose florets are dark green and tightly closed
-  Stalks should be very firm and slender
-  Avoid broccoli with open, flowering, yellow colored or water-soaked bud clusters and tough, woody stems
-  Avoid those with stalks that are bendable or rubbery

☺ FUN FACTS! ☺

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Did you know...

- ☺ **Did you know broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable and member of the cabbage family?** (Cruciferous vegetables help prevent cancer.)
- ☺ **Did you know there are different vegetables closely related to broccoli?** (Broccolini, a cross between broccoli and kale; Broccoflower, a cross between broccoli and cauliflower; Broccoli Raab, long leafy stalks topped with small florets that look like broccoli)
- ☺ **Did you know over the last 25 years broccoli consumption has increased over 940%?**
- ☺ **Did you know broccoli has as much calcium, ounce per ounce, as milk?**
- ☺ **Did you know that the average person in the United States today, eats 4 ½ pounds of broccoli per year?**
- ☺ **Did you know that broccoli florets that are purplish or dark green contain more beta-carotene and vitamin C than paler ones?**
- ☺ **Did you know that frozen broccoli has twice as much sodium as fresh?** (Frozen is still low in sodium; approximately 68 mg of sodium per 10 ounce package. It is recommended, in the School Lunch Program that a complete lunch contain 800 mg of sodium or less.)
- ☺ **Did you know one spear of broccoli counts towards your 5 a day?**
- ☺ **Did you know that if you cut an “X” in the bottom of each stalk of broccoli it will cook more evenly?** (The broccoli florets tend to cook quicker than the stalks; therefore cutting in each stalk helps the stalks cook quicker.)
- ☺ **Did you know that if a broccoli head was not picked when the flowers were still compact, that the flower buds would open as bright yellow flowers?**
- ☺ **Did you know that over 30,000 broccoli plants can be grown on one acre of land?**

Remember ... Include 5 - 9 servings of fruits and vegetables per day!