



BRASSICAS

What is It?

- Broccoli, cauliflower, and romanesco are in the brassica (also known as cruciferous) family.
- These three vegetables developed from the same plant, but plant breeders have created a wide range of colors and head shapes over time.
- Some varieties of cauliflower are orange or yellow and broccoli, cauliflower, and romanesco all have purple varieties.
- A head of broccoli, cauliflower, or romanesco is made up of many immature flower buds. If the head isn't harvested, it will turn into a bunch of small yellow flowers.



Grow It

- Broccoli, cauliflower, and romanesco can be seeded directly in the soil, or planted as starts (young plants that have been started in small pots). They should be planted 12-24 inches apart and watered regularly to keep soil evenly moist. Once the plant is about four inches tall, it benefits from added fertilizer every three to four weeks.
- Plants are ready to harvest when they have developed tight, dense flower buds. Hot temperatures may cause these plants to send out flower stalks, which is called "bolting." This makes the plants taste bitter, so it is important to harvest before bolting occurs. To protect cauliflower heads from sun damage, the top outer leaves of the plant can be wrapped around the head and tied together with twine until the plant is ready to harvest.
- To save on time and garden space, broccoli shoots are easy to grow in the classroom if you have access to a sunny window or a grow light. Follow this guide to grow broccoli shoots any time of the year: [Growing Microgreens](#).



Red cabbage, credit: WSDA



Make It

Be sure to follow local Food Safety rules and regulations. Learn more here: [Food Safety Rules and Regulations | Washington State Department of Health](#).

Equipment List:

- Large pot
- Strainer
- Large skillet
- Spatula or spoon

Recipe: Broccoli with Garlic Yield: 4 servings	
Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 cups broccoli, chopped • 2 teaspoons olive oil • 2 cloves garlic, minced • 3 tabelspoons water 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a pot, over low-medium heat: add water and broccoli, simmer for 3-6 minutes. (The less time you simmer it, the crunchier it will be.) 2. Remove the pot from the heat and drain any remaining water. 3. In a small skillet, over medium heat: sauté garlic in olive oil until golden brown. 4. Pour garlic and oil over broccoli. Serve warm.

Explore interactive taste test resources to encourage participants to try what you made!
[Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)



Cabbages, credit: WSDA



The Six Plant Parts

Learn It

Objectives

Kids will identify the six main plant parts that people eat and provide examples of each.

Materials

- The Vegetables We Eat (book), by Gail Gibbons

Directions

1. Ask students:
 - a. Can you list the six parts of the plant and provide an example of each one? There are six main plant parts that people eat—seeds, roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruit. The following are edible examples of each part: bean (seed), carrot (root), asparagus (stem), spinach (leaf), cauliflower (flower), and apple (fruit).
 - b. What part of the plant is broccoli? (Flower)
 - c. Can you name any other flowers that we eat? (Cauliflower, violets, and squash blossoms.)

2. For more fun, play the song "[Roots, Stems, Leaves](#)" by the [Banana Slug String Band](#).

Lesson adapted from: [Harvest for Healthy Kids](#).



Eat It

- Broccoli, cauliflower, and romanesco are all high in Vitamin C, which supports healthy skin, tendons, ligaments, blood vessels, and our immune system.



Cauliflower, credit: WSDA

Read It

- The Trouble with Cauliflower, by Jane Sutton
- Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli, by Barbara Hicks
- The Boy Who Loved Broccoli, by Sarah A. Creighton
- The Vegetables We Eat, by Gail Gibbons

More About It

- Lesson for preschool by Harvest for Healthy Kids: https://mhcheadstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/HfHK_Cauliflower.zip
- Lessons by South Dakota State University:
 - Preschool (broccoli): [Broccoli - Preschool Lesson Plan](#)
 - Preschool (cauliflower): extension.sdstate.edu/sites/default/files/2024-04/S-0001-13-Cauliflower-Preschool.pdf
 - Adults and youth (broccoli): [Broccoli - Schools and Adults](#)
 - Adults and youth (cauliflower): extension.sdstate.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/S-0001-13-Cauliflower-Schools_Adults.pdf
- Classroom lesson for Elementary by University of Tennessee Extension: [Lesson 4 - Broccoli.pdf](#)
- Lesson Plan for Middle and High School: geometry of romanesco: [Fractals in Nature](#).