#670 IB1

Arugula

Eruca vesicaria ssp. *sativa*

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Return to: *Index to Vegetable Production Guides*

Go to: | Fertilizers Harvesting, Handling, Storage Pest Control

Arugula (arrugula) is a tangy mustard green, also known as Rocket, Mediterranean Salad, Rucola or Roquette in Europe, also as Gharghir by people in the Middle East. Arugula is now popular as a gourmet salad green.

VARIETIES

Arugula, Rocket, Roquette. For other greens see separate file Mustard Greens. All are quick to mature (approximately 40-50 days).

SOIL

Arugula may be grown on a wide range of soil types. Loose fertile loams, and muck soils are best. Soils should provide good water holding capacity and good internal drainage, and a pH of 6.0-7.0. Since arrugula may be harvested late into the fall, soils should be chosen that allow harvest in moderately rainy conditions.

SEED TREATMENT

Use a fungicide treated seed whenever possible. Have germination checked before planting if germination value is not known or current. Pelletizing seed allows precision planting.

SEEDING

Arugula performs best under cool temperatures and is therefore grown from seed in early spring or late fall (plant as early in the spring as possible). Stagger plantings once or twice per week, planting only what can be harvested, bunched and sold during that interval. Arugula can withstand light frosts.

Transplant only for the earliest crops. Grow transplants about 4 weeks prior to the time they are needed using modular trays, allowing 1 to 1 1/2 square inches per plant.

SPACINGS

Rows should be 12-15 inches apart, with plants 6-9 inches apart in the row. Spacing depends on cultivar and crop being grown. Close spacings cover the ground quickly and reduce risk of soil contamination of the product from rain or irrigation splashing.

FERTILIZER

Nitrogen: 100-125 lb N/acre - split applications not necessary due to quickness of this crop.
Phosphorus: 100-150 (P_2O_5) lb/acre - apply all at time of seeding or transplanting preferably banded 2 inches to the side and 2 inches below the seed or plant roots.

Potassium: 50-150 (K2O) lb/acre - broadcast prior to planting.
Sulfur: 20-30 (S) lb/acre - broadcast prior to planting.

These recommendations are intended to provide adequate fertilizer. For western Oregon soils. Nitrogen rates especially may need to be adjusted depending on crop planting date, weather conditions and soil type.

IRRIGATION

Arugula requires a uniform supply of water for tender growth. Frequent irrigations are preferred because of shallow rooting. A total of 8-12 inches of water may be necessary depending on seasonal variation, variety and planting date.

Soil type does not affect the amount of total water needed, but does dictate frequency of water application. Lighter soils need more frequent water applications, but less water applied per application.

HARVESTING, HANDLING, AND STORAGE

The University of California-Davis has a file on Minimal Processing of Fresh Vegetables that discusses film wrapping and other topics.

The crop is generally ready to harvest 6-7 weeks after seeding in the field. Yields are approximately 800-1000 cartons per acre.

Harvest is done by hand. The crop is cut, bunched and packed into cartons in the field, much like spinach. Keep the leafy items clean, and free of soil and mud. Ideally arrugula has dark green, somewhat smooth leaves and a spicy taste. A strong taste and toughness develops if harvest is delayed and leaves begin to develop a furry underside. Continuous cutting of the young leaves stimulates further leaf production. If the crop becomes over-mature, the product becomes unmarketable.

Leafy items are extremely perishable and need to be handled delicately, and marketed rapidly. Cool the product quickly. Hydro-cooling or vacuum cooling are preferred. Protect the product from wilting or heating. It may be held temporarily at 32-34 F and 90-95% relative humidity.

PACKAGING

Arugula and other leafy greens are packaged in cartons containing 8-10 lb depending on the item. Consult buyers for preferred packaging, and container sizes.

ARUGULA PEST CONTROL

WEED CONTROL

The Pacific Northwest Weed Control Handbook has no control entries for this crop. Cultivate as often as necessary when weeds are small. Proper cultivation, field selection and rotations can reduce or eliminate the need for chemical weed control.

INSECT CONTROL

The Pacific Northwest Insect Control Handbook has no control entries for this crop. Proper rotations and field selection can minimize problems with insects.

DISEASE CONTROL

The Pacific Northwest Disease Control Handbook has no control entries for this crop. Proper rotations, field selection, sanitation, spacings, fertilizer and irrigation practices can reduce the risk of many diseases. Fields can be tested for presence of harmful nematodes. Using seed from reputable sources reduces risk from "seed-borne" diseases.

Return to: *Beginning of This File* *Index to Vegetable Production Guides*