

NEWS RELEASE  
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## GROWING COLE CROPS – BROCCOLI, BRUSSELS SPROUTS, CABBAGE

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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Assuming we have a normal fall weather pattern, now is a good time to plant cole crops in most of Mariposa County. Although they are called cool season vegetables, this term refers to the period when the plants mature, not when they should be planted.

Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage are all actually of the same genus and species – Brassica oleracea. Transplants are now available in nurseries and include a wide assortment. According to the new UC Master Gardener Handbook, the recommended varieties of broccoli include Green Comet, Premium Crop, and Green Goliath, among others. Brussels sprouts varieties include Jade Cross, Long Island Improved, and Prince Marvel. All the cole crops need an average of about three months to mature from transplanting. Both broccoli and Brussels sprouts can produce a succession of harvests for as long as three months. After harvesting the first immature broccoli head, smaller heads will form from axillary shoots along the plant. Brussels sprouts start maturing along the plant starting from the bottom.

Although cole crops are basically hardy, they are susceptible to a few insects and diseases. It is best not to plant these types of vegetables in the same spot year after year. By rotating your garden, you can reduce pest problems. Insecticidal soap can be used if your plants develop aphids. To control caterpillars, consider *Bacillus thuringiensis*, an

effective biological control sold as Dipel or Thuricide. Consistent, thorough watering will help produce more vigorous plants that are resistant to pests.

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Photo below: Broccoli Romanesco

