



# Broccoli



## History

Broccoli has been growing for over 2000 years and was a favorite vegetable of the Romans. It originally was grown in the eastern Mediterranean region.



Broccoli wasn't introduced to North American soil until the 1900's when Italian immigrants planted it in their family gardens in New York. In the late 1920's Italian immigrants in northern California began planting broccoli to sell commercially.

Today, California produces over 90% of the United States broccoli crop. Other states that grow broccoli include Wisconsin, Ohio, Arizona, Maine, Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Texas, and Florida. With growers across the nation, fresh broccoli is available in grocery stores throughout the year.

## Broccoli Varieties

*Calabrese broccoli* is the most common variety of broccoli found in the United States. It was first grown in the Calabria region of Italy. It is also known as the Italian Green.

*Broccoli Rabe* (pronounced ROB) is another type of broccoli that is grown in the Mediterranean region of the world. This type of broccoli has thinner stalks and a much stronger flavor than the Calabrese, and is very popular in Italian cuisine.

*Broccolini* is also called baby broccoli. It is a cross between Chinese kale and Calabrese broccoli but it looks like asparagus stalks with a broccoli head. It is smaller and sweeter than regular broccoli.

## Fun facts

- Broccoli heads are made up of little buds that are ready to flower.
- Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable. It is called this because of the flowers have four petals and resemble a Greek cross.
- Broccoli is related to cauliflower, kale, cabbage, turnips, rutabagas, Brussels sprouts and Chinese cabbage.
- Broccoli comes from the Latin word *brachium* – which means *branch* or *arm*
- Broccoli wasn't introduced to northern Europe until the 1500's when it made its way to France
- Broccoli was introduced to England in the 1720's
- Over 30,000 broccoli plants can grow on 1 acre of land
- If broccoli is not harvested in time, it will turn into a head of yellow flowers.



In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights (Office of Adjudication), 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal Relay at (800) 877-8339 (DD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.