

MIR 1237

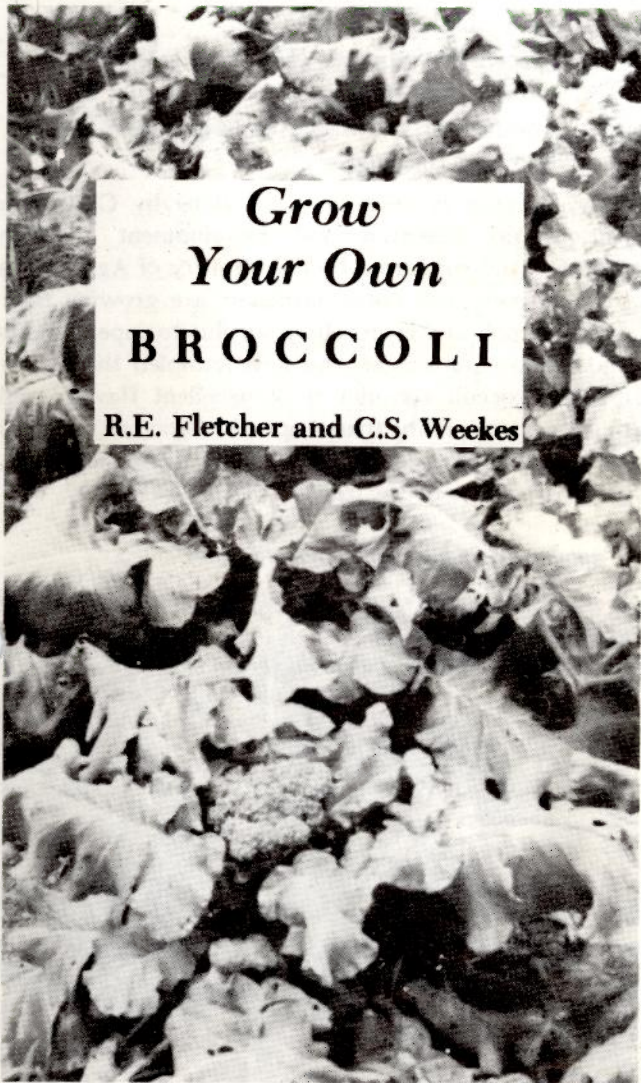
1623.F5

CARDI

Caribbean  
Agricultural  
Research and  
Development  
Institute

MNI-FS 1/85

**Factsheet**



*Grow  
Your Own*  
**BROCCOLI**  
R.E. Fletcher and C.S. Weekes

*Produced by* - CARDI Montserrat Country Team  
c/o Ministry of Agriculture, P.O. Box 272, Plymouth,  
Montserrat

An Output of the CARDI-USAID Farming Systems  
Research & Development (FSRD) Project 538-0099

Printed by Montserrat Printery Limited - Montserrat

**SEPTEMBER 1985**

## CAN BROCCOLI BE GROWN IN MONTSERRAT

Have you ever considered growing Broccoli on your vegetable farm or in your home garden? If you did in the past, you may have encountered one or more of the following problems:-

- Unavailability of seeds.
- Growing temperate varieties not adapted to Montserrat conditions.
- Insufficient knowledge or information about growing the crop.

Now, because of research work done by Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, some farmers and home gardeners are growing their own Broccoli and even selling surplus to supermarkets and hotels. Consumers who have sampled the locally grown Broccoli consider it of excellent flavour and much better quality than imported Broccoli which is kept in cold storage for several days during shipping, and therefore is not as fresh.

*A good crop of broccoli - Green Comet*



## HOW EASY IS IT

Growing Broccoli is as easy as growing cabbage or perhaps even easier, and there are some advantages for home garden producers.

- (i) The crop ratoons or produces side shoots after the main head is harvested. You can therefore make several harvests from a single Broccoli plant.
- (ii) Pests and diseases are similar to those of cabbage, however, the dreaded diamond back moth does not do as much damage to the Broccoli head as it does to cabbage. Also Broccoli does not succumb to black rot or other head rots as readily as cabbage.
- (iii) Broccoli seems to be able to tolerate drought conditions better than cabbage.

*"Green Comet" - adapted to hot tropical conditions*



**Varieties:** Two varieties have been identified as suitable for production under Montserrat conditions. They are *Green Comet* and *Hy Crown*. Another variety - *Southern Comet* which has not been tested here in Montserrat is also reputed to do well under these conditions. Be sure when buying Broccoli seeds from the garden shops to get one of the above recommended varieties. **Other varieties will probably not head.**

## HOW TO GROW BROCCOLI

**Locations:** Broccoli will grow in most locations where other vegetables are normally produced, however, the crop likes deep rich well manured soils and will produce considerably better on such soils. Better crop performance can also be expected in the cooler highland areas of the Soufriere Hills and Centre Hills. Broccoli will do well in any kitchen garden in a sunny (not shaded) location and provided with adequate moisture.

**When to plant:** The recommended varieties can be planted year-round. Higher yields can be expected in the cooler months of November to April. Adequate soil moisture is vital to good yields and irrigation must be provided during the dry season. For continuous year round production, seeds or seedlings should be put down every four weeks.

**Nursery and Transplanting:** Seeds sown in a well prepared seedbed produce sturdy seedlings in 4 weeks. Seedlings should be transplanted on 3 feet banks with two rows per bank and plants spaced 1 foot in the row. Ensure that soil moist during and after transplanting to guarantee survival especially under dry conditions.

**Weed control:** Keep the crop free of weeds by hoeing. Two or three hoeings may be necessary during the life of the crop. Herbicide use for weed control is not recommended for small scale cultivation.

**Pests and diseases:** Broccoli is subject to similar group of pests and diseases as attack cabbage. The major pest is diamond back moth which does not seem to affect the flowering head as severely as cabbage and cauliflower. This is a distinct advantage. Broccoli is also susceptible to black rot disease but again, infected heads do not spoil as readily as cabbage.

### Fertilizing Broccoli:

(i) Well rotted pen manure worked into the soil before transplanting will ensure good vigorous early growth of the crop, providing the foundation for big solid heads.

(ii) On soils that are not very productive a dressing of 12:24:12 fertilizer should also be applied one week after transplanting at approximately ½ oz. per plant.

(iii) After the first harvest, sidedressing with Suplimate of Amonia at ½ oz. per plant will encourage growth of side shoots which will produce a second crop. On light sandy soils use 12:24:12 instead.

**Harvesting:** Timing of harvest is very important especially in the hot dry season, as Broccoli "bolts" very easily if left too long in the field. The head of Broccoli which is harvested and eaten is in fact a compact flower stalk with several thousand florets.

*- Mature head ready for harvest -*



During bolting these flower buds or florets grow very rapidly and open to produce small yellow flowers. At that stage the crop is not marketable. The following guides for maturity and harvesting should be followed to avoid losses in the field.

(i) Green Comet matures 50 days from transplanting and Hy Crown 60 days.

(ii) A mature head of Broccoli is 4" to 8" across and compact.

(iii) Loose heads are a sign of over maturity. Loose heads should be harvested immediately. Bolted heads should also be removed from the plant.

(iv) Harvesting involves the removal of the head from the plant with 4" to 6" of stem. This stem is soft and edible when cooked.

(v) Harvested heads should be kept in a cool shaded area and refrigerated as soon as possible.

#### *Harvested broccoli ready for market*



**-Yields:** Broccoli grown under the conditions recommended here can yield up to 7,000 lbs per acre. Heads normally weigh 5 to 9 ounces each or a bank of 100 plants will yield a total of 40 lbs. The current price on Montserrat is EC\$4.00 to \$5.00 per lb.

**Marketing:** Broccoli should be marketed on the same day it is harvested. Broccoli kept in the open or direct sunshine after harvest tends to wilt and lose quality. When exposed for sale the heads should be packed in plastic bags especially if placed in a chill cabinet.

#### **KITCHEN PREPARATION**

A variety of dishes can be prepared with this wholesome nutritious vegetable.

(i) Steamed or boiled for a few minutes only. Quick steaming produces an attractive green which enhances the appearance of any dish.

(ii) Steamed and served with cheese sauce.

(iii) In vegetable casseroles.

(iv) In soups.

(v) Stir fried alone or with other vegetables.

Freshly harvested Broccoli can also be broken into conveniently sized pieces called "spears" which can then be blanched (boiling water for one minute followed immediately by cold water) packed in plastic freezer bags and frozen. Quality and flavour is retained for several weeks.

*- Start Growing Broccoli -*

*A Tasty Nutritious Vegetable*

