

1623

GROWING CAULIFLOWER

Adisak Sajjapongse

RECEIVED
1623, 53
MAR 29 1993
CARDI INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE



GROWING CAULIFLOWER

Cauliflower is grown for its crisp white "curd" or head. It is a relative of the cabbage, and seedlings of cauliflower look much like those of cabbage. The "curd" is either eaten raw in salads, or cooked and eaten, sometimes in a sauce. Cauliflower is in demand from hotels and restaurants catering to the tourist trade.

Cauliflower is a cool weather crop. However, heat-tolerant varieties are now available and these can be grown in the tropical lowlands. Nevertheless, the highest yields and the largest heads will be obtained in cooler upland areas, and during the cooler season.

Like most vegetables, cauliflower curds contain about 90% water. There are small amounts of protein, carbohydrates and minerals, and the curd also contains some vitamins.

HOW TO GROW CAULIFLOWER

CLIMATE: In lowland areas, cauliflower is best grown during the "winter" months – from December through March. In upland areas, cauliflower can be grown any time of the year. There must be ample water available either as rain or from irrigation. Severe water stress will cause the crop to fail.

SOIL: Cauliflower will grow on any good soil. A well-drained, friable soil with plenty of organic matter will give the best results. The soil pH should be between 5 and 7.

VARIETY: CARDI has identified three varieties with good heat-tolerance. They are CHIA TAI No. 1, FENGSHAN EXTRA EARLY, and F451. All these varieties are ready for harvesting about 45 days after transplanting.

SOWING THE SEEDS: Seeds should be sown in trays or flats, or in well-prepared nursery beds. If you use tyres, follow the procedures in the CARDI FACTSHEET "The Production of Vegetable Seedlings". Trays or seed-beds must be kept moist to ensure healthy seedlings, but do not overwater. The seedlings are ready for transplanting when they have four or five true leaves. This will be about 25 days after sowing.

TRANSPLANTING: Seedlings should be hardened before transplanting, by applying less water for a few days. But they should not be allowed to wilt. Immediately before transplanting, water well to ensure that soil sticks to the roots. Transplant in late-afternoon to reduce transplanting shock and apply sufficient water to each seedling immediately after transplanting. Spacing should be 50 x 50 cm (20 x 20 in).

FERTILIZER APPLICATION: For best results, cauliflower should be fertilized **three** times. Just before transplanting, fork or rake in to the soil, 80 kg/ha N, 100 kg/ha P₂O₅ and 80 kg/ha K₂O. (This is equivalent to 175 kg/ha urea or 380 kg/ha sulphate of ammonia, 500 kg/ha superphosphate or 220 kg/ha triple superphosphate, and 135 kg/ha muriate of potash). Then, at two weeks and again at four weeks after transplanting, apply 40 kg/ha N and 40 kg/ha K₂O in a ring around each plant. (This is equivalent to 4.5 g or 1/6 oz

of urea per plant, or 9.5 g or 1/3 oz of sulphate of ammonia per plant, and 4.5 g or 1/6 oz of muriate of potash per plant). Extension Officer will help you work out how much to use if you are using other fertilizers than those mentioned.

CROP CARE: Cauliflower must grow without a water check to produce good-sized heads. So if rainfall is inadequate, it is important to irrigate or water. Weeds must be controlled to ensure good yields. Round-up^(R) or Gramoxone^(R) can be used in land preparation. Weeds in the crop should be controlled by hoe, cutlass, hand pulling or by other mechanical means. A "weed wiper" with Round-up^(R) can also be used after transplanting. Ask your Extension Officer or CARDI for advice on this.

BLANCHING: The perfect cauliflower head is white, but to achieve this bright sunlight must be excluded. The leaves of the plant fold over the head when young, but as the head grows it becomes exposed. A common practice is to bring some of the outer leaves up over the head, and to tie them with twine.

HARVESTING: When the heads are well-formed and firm, cut below the inner leaves so as to leave behind the older outer leaves. Trim the remaining leaves so that the head can be seen. Keep covered and in the shade and market as soon as possible.



Disclaimer

Mention of specific products by registered name does not constitute endorsement or recommendation, but is for the purpose of illustration only.