

Winter veggie planting: seeds that thrive in cooler temperatures

April is the best time for planting winter vegetables in South Africa. For those looking forward to warm meals cooked at home with fresh ingredients from the garden, RAW shares some ideas for seeds that thrive in cooler temperatures.

- **Broccoli:** A cool weather growing crop. Gone are the days when boiled broccoli was just a side-thought to add some green to the plate – well for most foodies anyway. Grilled with olive oil and sea-salt, sautéed in an Asian style stir-fry or the anchor ingredient to a four cheese gratin, the vegetable has certainly undergone a personality change. The health benefits remained unchanged, although we take no responsibility for the side effects of the gratin – friend onion bits on top optional too.



Purple Sprouting

- **Purple Sprouting:** This heirloom variety might look a little wild with its colourful florets and varying stem lengths but once sliced and diced it all goes down the same way with just a spoon full of soya sauce or butter. A staple for many Asian dishes, you can use this baby raw in salads or cooked as a side to your main attraction. Best sown in temps between 10 - 20C, space plants 20 x 30cm apart and you can expect seeds to start germinating within 7-14 days.

- **Spring Rapini:** Grown in the same way as its purple cousin, this variety looks a little more like a turnip green and goes by a few names. In Italy, it's referred to as broccoli rabe and in Naples as friarelli. We are particularly fond of the Roman version – broccoletti which just rolls off the tongue. But again it all tastes delicious.



- **Radishes:** An edible root vegetable most commonly eaten raw, these are seeds that germinate quickly, grow rapidly and thrive in cooler temperatures. The heads tend to begin green and turn a deep red colour with white midribs and veins at the onset of cooler temperatures – which makes for some great Instagram brag pics. While us South Africans are most comfortable with a raw radish in a salad, these guys are pretty delicious on the braai with a nice layer of butter or oil and some salt and pepper too.

This could also be the best friend to the other veggies in the patch. Often useful as a companion plant, because of its pungent odour, radishes are known to deter pests and insects. Hopefully, you can do them justice in the kitchen and not deter that special someone you may be trying to impress with your culinary skills. Radish Watermelon is really the seed to plant at this time of year as it thrives in temperatures around 20C as the cooler temperatures sweeten the fruit.

- **Kale:** Another seed that is happiest in cooler temperatures, RAW's Kale Vates Blue Curled seeds are a delicious mouthful. A hardy vegetable, this varietal hails from Scotland and has finely curled blue-green leaves (hence the name). Very much "on fleek" at the moment (or so we hear through the hipster grapevine), kale is a firm favourite in many a new-age diet. From kale chips (we're sorry Simba) to shakes and juices, the health benefits of kale include a good dose of vitamins A, C, and K as well as helping to lower cholesterol. A single raw cup contains almost seven times the daily recommended intake of Vitamin K, essential in helping the body with blood clotting.