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virginia home food production



RHUBARB
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

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MH 433

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BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: sunny

SOIL: well-drained loam

FERTILITY: rich
pH: 5.5-7.0

TEMPERATURE: winter minimum 30°F

MOISTURE: moist, but not water
logged



CULTURE

PLANTING: Plant roots in early spring; the crown bud should be 2" below the surface.

SPACING: 36-48" x 36-48"

HARDINESS: hardy perennial

FERTILIZER NEEDS: heavy feeder, (1 lb. 5-10-20 per 10 feet of row before plants are set.)

CULTURAL PRACTICES: Seeds are not recommended to start plantings because they take too long to become established.

Old roots should be dug and divided to make new plantings, Cut roots into 4-8 pieces, each piece should have at least one

strong bud. Roots should be divided after 5 or more years. Seed shafts should be removed as they appear.

The leaf blades should not be eaten because they contain a large amount of oxalic acid; only the petioles or leaf stalks should be eaten. Petioles are of highest quality in the spring. Leaf stalks that are damaged by frost should not be eaten because oxalic acid may migrate to the stalks from the leaves.

Rhubarb can be forced indoors during the winter. A vigorous crown can be dug up in the fall for indoor forcing and planted outside again in the spring.

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COMMON PROBLEMS

DISEASES: Phytophthora (crown rot)

INSECTS: Rhubarb curculio

CULTURAL: small leaves and stalks (excessive crowding, old plants, and/or low soil fertility.)

STORAGE: cool (32°F), moist (95% RH) conditions, 2-4 weeks

PRESERVATION: freezing, canning

Prepared by: D. Relf, B. Adler,
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NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1 cup cooked, sweetened rhubarb

| | <u>Grams</u> | <u>Calories</u> | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| | 270 | 380 | |
| | <u>% U.S. RDA</u> | | |
| <u>Vitamin A</u> | <u>Vitamin C</u> | <u>Calcium</u> | |
| 4 | 25 | 20 | |

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

DAYS TO MATURITY: 1 year after planting

HARVEST: Rhubarb should not be harvested during the first year and there should be only a limited harvest the second year.

Harvest rhubarb from early spring to June. Some leaves should be left to store food reserves.

Stalks should be pulled and not cut. Leaf blades should be removed and only the fleshy stem of the petiole should be used. Petioles are usually 8-15" when harvested.

APPROXIMATE YIELD: (per 10 feet of row) 8-12 lbs.

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON:
10 lbs.