

Cabbage Production in Miami-Dade County, Florida¹

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Situation

Cabbages in Miami-Dade County, are grown annually on 100 to 500 acres, and sold nationwide during the winter in the fresh market. Yields for cabbage range from less than 300 crates/acre to more than 800 crates/acre. The production cost in 1999-2000 was about \$6.56 per 50-pound crate or \$2,788/acre for an acceptable yield of 425 crates/acre.

Varieties

Refer to the Vegetable Production Guide for Florida (SP170) for variety selection.

Soils, Land Preparation, and Transplanting

Cabbages in Miami-Dade County are mainly grown on gravelly soils. Cabbages can be transplanted or direct seeded with 24 to 36 inch spacing between rows, and 9-16 inches between plants in a row. The planting season extends from September to January.

Fertilizer

Calibrated soil tests for the calcareous soils of Miami-Dade County are not available presently. Therefore, tissue analysis is recommended for determining the composition and rates of fertilizers to be applied. Instructions for tissue sample collection, preparation and submission are provided in Plant Tissue Information Sheet (SL-131), which is available from the County office of the Cooperative Extension Service. Information on plant tissue analysis for Cabbages is provided in the Vegetable Production Guide for Florida (SP170). The total amount of fertilizer required in Miami-Dade County depends on the variety, soil fertility, and other environmental factors. Less inorganic fertilizer should be applied if a cover crop or a soil organic amendment (compost, biosolids, manure) has been applied. Preplanting fertilizer formulas of 6-6-6, 6-3-6, 10-10-10, or similar formulas are satisfactory. All P and 20-30% of N and of K should be incorporated into the soil prior to planting. The remaining fertilizer should be side-dressed 2-3 times starting 3 weeks after planting. Magnesium nitrate or

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sulfate and EDDHA-chelated iron should be applied if deficiency symptoms appear.

Irrigation and Freeze Protection

A big gun or sprinkler irrigation system can be used for cabbage. The water requirements for young plants are very low. A tensiometer installed at a 6-inch depth can be used for irrigation scheduling. Optimal plant growth and yields are achieved when the soil moisture is maintained at tensiometer readings between 10 to 15 cbars. The Miami-Dade County Cooperative Extension Service provides relevant information and calibration services for tensiometers.

Cabbage does not sustain frost injury until temperatures drop 10 to 16 °F below freezing. Therefore growers in Miami-Dade County do not arrange for freeze protection of cabbage from freezing.

Insect Management

Refer to the Vegetable Production Guide for Florida (SP170) for extensive information on insect control. The most damaging pest is the diamondback moth larvae for which several materials are available.

Disease Management

Refer to the Vegetable Production Guide for Florida (SP170).

Weed Management

Refer to the Vegetable Production Guide for Florida (SP170).

Harvest

The harvest season extends from November to April. Cabbage are picked by hands.

Multiple Cropping/Rotation

Cabbage can be rotated with tomatoes, squash, beans, okra, and cucumbers.