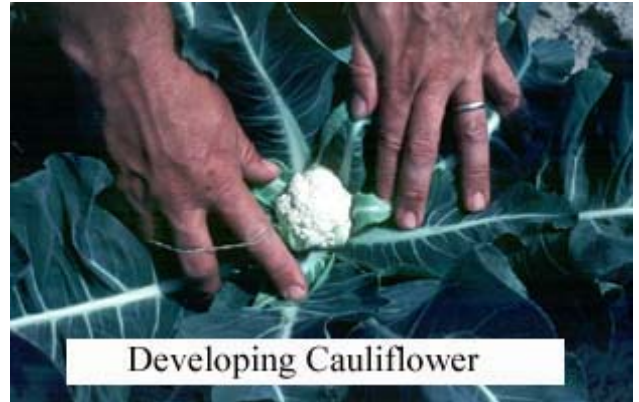# CAULIFLOWER

This cool-season vegetable is a close relative of cabbage. However, cauliflower takes longer to develop and is not as cold hardy as cabbage and broccoli. Therefore, cauliflower often is considered more difficult to grow. It is also fairly intolerant of summer heat and drought.

Developing Cauliflower

Varieties

Choose early maturing varieties such as Snow Crown, Early Snowball, or related varieties. Later maturing varieties including the self-blanche types, usually take too long for our shortened spring and fall seasons.

When to plant

Set transplants in early to mid-April for a spring crop or in early August for a fall crop. Cauliflower is difficult to direct seed most years in Kansas.

Spacing

Space plants 1½-2 feet apart in rows at least 3 feet apart. The plant is larger than cabbage or broccoli and needs more space.

Care

Use starter fertilizer when setting plants and provide additional fertilizer every 2-3 weeks during the growing season. Provide water during dry periods. When the heads are about the size of a quarter, blanche them by pulling a few leaves over the head to shade them from the hot sun. Secure the leaves with a rubber band, clothespin, or string. Check the development of the head by peeking through the leaves.

Harvesting

Cut heads when they are fully formed but before they are overmature, as indicated by a rough spiny appearance of the curds. This condition--called riciness--indicates that the head will be strong flavored and tough. In cool conditions, a slight purplish color may prevail in the heads and is normal. Some varieties also may produce a few leaves that will protrude through the head. Store cauliflower in a cold moist location for 2-3 weeks.

Common concerns

Imported Cabbageworm
Cabbage Looper
Aphids

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