



# Taunton Deane Perennial Kale

*Brassica Oleracea var Acephala*

A superb tasting, prolific perennial kale that is a must have for any kitchen garden

PLANT TYPE Vegetable

PLANT HABIT Evergreen perennial

USES Culinary

## DESCRIPTION

Taunton Deane kale is an excellent perennial kale that lives for 5-8 years, producing an abundance of nutritious and delicious leaves all year. When full sized the leaves can be considered both a leaf and a vegetable, as the stems are quite substantial (see gallery).

RECOMMENDED LOCATION Pot, Kitchen garden, Forest garden

ASPECT Moist full sun

HEIGHT Grows to 2 metres

SPREAD 1 - 1.5 metres

HARDINESS Hardy down to about -10c

PREFERRED SOIL PH Tolerant of a wide range of soils but prefers a soil pH of 6.5 or higher

## MANAGEMENT AND CARE

Is a surprisingly large (and top-heavy) plant when it gets underway. For this reason it's recommended staking it well (with a top fruit sized stake), otherwise it will lean over to a side as it gets bigger. Brassicas are favourite nibbles of pigeons in winter and early spring, so best netted in the winter or more ideally: placed/grown in a brassica cage. Will enjoy rich soil, a good composting and lots of water in the summer months. The plant will slow down after about 5 years so and will require propagation via cuttings to keep it as a vegetable. Cutting are easily established: cut side stems that have some woodiness at their base end, cleanly remove all leaves excepting the top growing tip and put into a pot, keeping moist. When established, plant out. This variety will occasionally go to seed, however it's recommended propagating vegetatively from cuttings which ensures that you keep it's unique characteristics.

## ORIGIN/HISTORY

"Cottage Kales" were grown widely up to Victorian times used to be far more common. Taunton Deane's origins are hard to pin down. It's known to have been widely grown in the Somerset area, possibly for over a 100 years.

Alison Tindale reports on her blog The Backyard Gardener (<https://backyardlarder.co.uk/2020/03/march-plant-profile-taunton-deane-kale/>): "In 2010 BBC Gardener's World featured this kale being grown at NT Knightshayes Court in Devon. It had been given to Lorraine the kitchen gardener manager there some years earlier by a visitor from Somerset who said it grew widely in their locality. It isn't clear if it was already named Taunton Deane kale at that point or if it acquired that name at Knightshayes to mark its geographical origin. (Taunton Deane was a modern administrative district of Somerset from 1974-2019 but was also an Anglo-Saxon 'Hundred' of Somerset before the Norman conquest, deane coming from denu, Old English for valley.)"