

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
Department of Horticultural Science

UPLAND CRESS

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Soils – Fertile, well-drained sandy loam or clay loam soils are satisfactory for the production of upland cress. Maintain organic matter of the soil by turning under cover crops. Use level or nearly level land to avoid erosion.

Varieties – There are many names for upland and other kinds of cresses, causing confusion in identification. Upland cress should not be confused with water cress or with pepper grass (*Lepidium nativum*) which is also called garden cress or land cress. In parts of North Carolina where Upland Cress and a similar variety grows as weeds, they are sometimes called creasy salad, creasy greens, or highland creasy. Because of the confusion in the names of cresses, when ordering upland cress the grower should include the scientific name, which is *Barbarea verna*. Example: upland cress (*Barbarea verna*).

Fertilizing – On sands and sandy loams, broadcast and work into the soil before planting 600 to 800 lb of 10-10-10 per acre. On silt and clay loams, the amounts of fertilizer may be reduced by about 200 lb per acre.

If the plants lose the deep green color, tending toward a yellowish-green, a sidedressing of 50 lb per acre of quickly available nitrate nitrogen may be beneficial. The nitrogen sidedressing should be made when the plants are dry to avoid burning.

Lime Requirements – pH 5.8 to 6.5. Have your soil tested to determine the amount of lime to apply.

Planting Time – The upland cress crops are sown about the middle of August when the soil is moist. These crops are usually harvested from January to March.

Spacing – Drill the seed in rows 12 to 14 inches apart. A spacing of from 3 to 6 inches apart in the row is desirable. Precision seeding with a Gaspardo, Stan Hay or Nibex seeder will reduce the seed used and the need to thin.

Method – The land should be plowed far enough ahead so that it may be harrowed several times before planting. It is essential that the seed bed be smooth and firm. Some growers use a pulverizer after planting, but this practice may do more harm than good on soils of different texture and condition. Drill in rows 1 1/2 to 2 lb of seed per acre. The seed should be planted 1/2 inch deep in soil of average texture. The depth of planting should be a little greater in light sandy soils and a little less in heavy clay loams.

Weed Control* – Shallow cultivation between rows will control weeds until cold weather retards their growth. This cultivation is not difficult if suitable cultivating equipment is available.

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Insects and Diseases* – There is usually very little trouble from diseases of upland cress planted in the late summer or early fall. Insects have caused little damage in the past, but root aphids now appear to be a threat to the crop. These aphids cause stunting and a considerable reduction in yield. The problem is so new that the frequency of attack by root aphids and their control have not yet been determined.

Harvesting – Upland cress is nearly always eaten as a cooked green like spinach or kale; however, in some

areas it is frequently eaten raw as a salad or garnish. Cut the entire plant when the size and market conditions will give maximum profits. Remove yellow or damaged leaves. Wash and pack in baskets. Place a chunk of ice in the basket or cool to increase shelf life.

* Consult the *1999 North Carolina Commercial Vegetable Recommendations* (AG-586) or your county Extension agent for the latest recommendations.