



THE  
*Dishii Nippon*  
PROJECT

2023

FROM TOKITA SEED COMPANY

[www.oishiinipponproject.com](http://www.oishiinipponproject.com)

# ABOUT OISHII NIPPON PROJECT

The Oishii Nippon Project was established in 2018 by Tokita, a Japanese seed company based in Saitama . The mission of the project is to share the beauty and deliciousness of Japanese vegetables with farms, gardens, and kitchens around the world. If you're wondering what the name means, Oishii (oy-shee) translates to "delicious", and Nippon (neep-pohn) is one of several words meaning "Japan".

The project currently has six varieties: Fioretto cauliflower, Negi, Saku Saku cabbage, Shishimai peppers, Sweet Kabu turnip, and Zuccuri kabocha, with plans to expand in the coming seasons.

## ABOUT OUR SEEDS



### **100+ YEARS OF EXPERTISE**

Our seeds are backed by over 100 years of vegetable breeding expertise – Tokita has been developing varieties since 1917.



### **NON-GMO**

All of our seeds are 100% non-GMO: no genetic engineering or related patents were used in the development of our varieties.



### **SATISFACTION GUARANTEED**

If anything you purchase from us is less than 100% satisfactory, we will either replace the item or refund the purchase price.



Our logo is quite special to us. You might recognize The Great Wave Off Kanagawa, the classic woodblock print by Ukiyo-e artist Hokusai, which inspired this vegetable-filled rendition.





## OISHII RECIPES FROM THE CIA

The Oishii Nippon Project partnered with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in 2021 to further explore the culinary potential of these unique varieties.

Visit our website for step-by-step videos of CIA Chef Toni Sakaguchi's new recipes – and don't forget to tag #oishiinippon when you share your creations.

### Fioretto

- Citrus Marinated Fioretto Salad
- Roasted Fioretto and Negi with Shaved Parmesan
- Spicy Fioretto Chipotle Tacos

### Negi

- Charred Negi with Mexican Corn Salsa
- Negi and Turnip Galette
- Negi Confit with Whole Grain Mustard Vinaigrette & a Poached Egg

### Zuccuri

- Zuccuri and Prosciutto Frito Misto
- Roasted Zuccuri Kale Salad with Chickpeas, and Tahini Yogurt

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CAULIFLOWER  
**FIORETTO**

*Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*

70-85 days from transplant



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Fioretto is an edible bouquet  
with long, tender stems and  
delicately sweet florets.



# FIORETTO

*Brassica oleracea var. botrytis*

The coral-like florets of the Fioretto resemble tiny flower bouquets. Their long, slender stems create a unique appearance compared to other cauliflowers. They also offer a delicately sweet flavor that is enhanced in cooking.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Varieties**

- Fioretto 70: long-day variety for summer (spring planting), 70 days to maturity.
- Fioretto 85: best for shorter days (fall planting), 85 days to maturity.
- Both grow similarly and can follow the guidelines below.

### **Germination**

- Transplanting required: Sow 1-2 seeds per cell into a 72-cell tray.
- Ensure cells are completely filled to avoid air pockets.
- Sow seeds 1/4" deep and cover gently. Avoid pressing firmly as compaction can cause difficulty transplanting.
- Thin to one plant per cell once established.
- Over-watering can create a crust-like soil layer, preventing germination. Maintain soil moisture through germination.

### **Transplanting**

- Check for readiness 30-35 days after germination by gently pulling on the base of the stem to see if roots are established and the soil is held together.
- Transplant to 8" spacing, with 18-24" between rows.

### **Harvest**

- Harvest when days to maturity is reached and stem is 6-8" in length.
- Cut the base of the head and remove smaller stems from the main stalk.

## COOKING DETAILS

Fioretto can be used in place of standard cauliflower or broccoli to liven up traditional recipes. This versatile vegetable can be enjoyed raw in salads and slaws, or lightly sauteed for a minute or two to add a touch of golden caramelization. The long stems lend themselves to dipping, either cooked or raw.

When roasted, Fioretto becomes delectably tender and combines wonderfully with the flavors of various herbs, spices and other ingredients. The florets also work well for a unique take on tempura, especially paired with lime and sea salt.



ALLIUM  
**NEGI**

*Allium fistulosum*

150 days to harvest



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Negi is a Japanese bunching onion, grown similarly to a leek.



# NEGI

*Allium fistulosum*

Succulent, fresh and fragrant – Negi is a staple of Washoku, cultivated in Japan since antiquity. It is found in many traditional Japanese dishes. This allium (related to onions and leeks) is distinguished by its long, sleek white stalks and hollow green tops. Like an onion, Negi has a core covered with layers that are succulent and flavorful when cooked.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Germination**

- Transplanting recommended. Sow 3 seeds per cell into a 128-cell tray.
- Fill cells evenly and fully with soil, shake gently to settle. Do not press hard on the soil; heavy compaction may prevent germination.
- Sow seeds 1/4" deep and cover gently.

### **Pruning & Preparation**

- Prune seedlings at 5" in length – cut to remove top 1" to stimulate more growth.
- If multiple seedlings per cell, gently separate prior to transplanting.

### **Transplanting**

- Transplant to 2" spacing.
- Plant deep: transplant 4–6" deep into soil, so only the green part of the stalk is showing.

### **Maintenance**

- Water generously once plants are established (3 times per week).
- Hilling: to establish the characteristic long white shank, the base of the plant cannot be exposed to sunlight. Bury plants repeatedly when shank is 3" above the soil.

### **Harvest**

- Harvest at 10–18" in length (depending on hilling) when fistulous layers form together and tighten.
- Mature stalks will feel dense, not spongy, when squeezed.
- Negi can hold in the soil for weeks after maturity, and can store for up to 8 weeks.

## COOKING DETAILS

Boasting a garlic-like aroma and sweet, earthy flavor profile, Negi is used to bring out the savory notes in meat, fish and vegetable dishes without overpowering them. Traditionally served as part of the Negima Yakitori, grilled negi pairs well with meats such as seared steak, pork chops and poultry. Negi can be substituted for leeks in pot roasts, onion tarts, potato gratins and casseroles for a hearty, slightly sweet flavor.

Negi is used as an aromatic – perfect for sprinkling over udon, ramen and soba and garnishing. Use negi as you would scallions or green onions in omelets, sauces and sautés, and as a topping for pizzas, soups and salads.



CABBAGE

# SAKU SAKU

*Brassica oleracea var. capitata*

65–75 days from transplant



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Saku Saku is a salad cabbage,  
named for the sound of its  
crisp raw eating quality.



# SAKU SAKU

*Brassica oleracea var. capitata*

This salad cabbage is a refreshing ingredient in Japanese cooking and often used to balance otherwise heavy dishes. *Saku Saku* is an onomatopoeia for the sound of chewing something crunchy. As its name suggests, this variety gives you a delightfully fresh crunch when biting into its snappy green leaves.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Germination**

- **Direct seeding:** sow 1–2 seeds every 6", 1/4" deep.
- **Transplanting:** Sow 1–2 seeds per cell into a 72-cell tray.
  - Ensure cells are completely filled to avoid air pockets.
  - Sow seeds 1/4–1/2" deep and cover gently. Avoid pressing too firmly; compaction can cause difficulty transplanting.
- Over-watering can create a crust-like soil layer, preventing germination. Maintain soil moisture through germination.
- Once germinated, avoid watering for 7–10 days to improve root growth and stronger development. Then water thoroughly to improve head size.
- Thin to one seedling per cell once established.

### **Transplanting**

- Check for readiness 40–45 days after germination by gently pulling on the base of the stem to see if the soil block stays together.
- Transplant to 12" spacing, with 14–18" between rows.

### **Maintenance**

- Cultivate to prevent weed competition and use best management practices. Use of light row cover can prevent damage from flea beetles and other brassica pests.

### **Harvest**

- Approximately 65–75 days from transplant.
- Harvest at 12–14" in diameter, when heads are firm.
- Cut the base of the stalk just above ground level.

## COOKING DETAILS

Saku Saku is wonderful when used fresh, and can be used in place of any other cabbage variety in salads and slaws. Fresh shredded Saku Saku makes a great addition to tacos, sandwiches and wraps for a bit of extra texture.

In Japan, it is common to find a mountain of julienned fresh cabbage on the plate of your deep fried favorites like tonkatsu, or Japanese pork cutlet. The light yet nutrient-dense cabbage helps to balance the flavors of fatty and meaty dishes in addition to the health benefits described above. Saku Saku can be lightly pickled or marinated to make Izakaya-style salted Saku Saku, a popular – and slightly addictive – pairing for a cold beer. The individual leaves can also be used as wrappers for steaming and blanching fish, meats, and dumplings.

PEPPER

# SHISHIMAI

*Capsicum annuum*

150 days from transplant



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Shishimai is a variety of Shishito pepper, with added disease resistance.



# SHISHIMAI

*Capsicum annuum*

Shishi means “lion” and Mai means “dance”. Shishimai is a festive dance performed in lion costumes at celebrations and festivals during the New Year. The performing lion “bites” children to ward off bad luck, improve academics, and bring good health.

Shishimai is the first Shishito variety with added L3 disease resistance against tobamoviruses. This pepper is bright and bite-sized, with the distinct Shishito pepper flavor that many now know and love. It is harvested green (before turning red) for peak flavor, and to avoid spiciness which can show up if fruits are harvested overripe.

Why shishi? The two split ends of the pepper resemble a lion with its mouth open.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Germination**

- Transplanting required. Sow 1-2 seeds per cell into a 72-cell tray. Thin to one plant per cell after germination.
- Sow seeds 1/4–1/2" deep and cover gently.
- Maintain soil moisture (clear tray covers may be helpful). Dry-wet cycles and overwatering can create a crust-like soil layer and prevent germination.
- Water as needed once first true leaves emerge; allow soil to dry between watering.

### **Transplanting**

- Check for readiness between 55–65 days after germination by gently pulling on the base of the stem to see if the roots hold the soil together.
- Transplant to 12" spacing.
- Plant deep: bury transplants up to first true leaves to support root growth.
- Transplant shock: leaves may turn yellow after transplant but will return to normal after 10–14 days.

### **Maintenance**

- Pruning: remove first 3–5 flowers to promote vegetative growth and encourage higher yields.
- Avoid overwatering: can cause peppers to enter dormancy.
- Cultivate to prevent weed growth and use best management practices for pests.

### **Harvest**

- Harvest at 2.5–4" when deep green.
- Continually harvest 2–3 times per week. Delayed harvest can prevent fruit set and decrease yields.
- Over-mature fruits will turn red and become spicy.

## COOKING DETAILS

Shishimai are best suited for light cooking methods like grilling, sauteing, roasting, and frying. The pepper’s skin blisters easily, giving it a beautiful char when grilled. Try them seared in a cast iron skillet with sesame oil and finished with a squeeze of lemon and sea salt for a savory and satisfying starter dish.

Safety Tip: Poke holes when frying to prevent the peppers from exploding.

TURNIP

# SWEET KABU

*Brassica rapa*

40-45 days to maturity



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Sweet Kabu is a fast-growing salad turnip, recommended for raw eating.



# SWEET KABU

*Brassica rapa*

Kabu, which translates to “turnips”, come in many different colors and shapes around the world; the silky, white turnip is the most popular type in Japan. It is an essential ingredient in the traditional porridge eaten on January 7 which marks the end of the New Year celebration period. Its other name, Suzuna, which combines the words for “bell” (suzu) and “green” or “leaf” (na), has the sacred meaning of a bell that calls the gods. This white turnip variety is different from other turnips offering juicier, more fruit-like flesh and mild sweetness in raw form.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Germination**

- Direct seeding highly recommended.
- Sow 1–2 seeds every 2” very shallow, 1/4” deep or less.
- Over-watering can create a crust-like soil layer, preventing germination. Maintain soil moisture through germination.
- Do not thin.

### **Maintenance**

- Once first true leaves have formed, water 2–3 days per week to promote root growth and foliage elongation.
- Cultivate planting beds to prevent weed competition and use best management practices for pests.
- Use of light row cover can prevent foliage damage from flea beetles and other brassica pests.

### **Harvest**

- Approximately 35–45 days from sowing, depending on temperatures.
- Harvest at approximately 2” in diameter. The root should be visible above the soil surface to evaluate size.
- Gently pull plants from the base of the stems to harvest.

## COOKING DETAILS

Sweet Kabu is best enjoyed raw or pickled and can be used in recipes calling for any type of turnip. Boasting a mild spicy-sweet flavor, Sweet Kabu can be sliced into one-eighth inch discs and served with fresh fruit or tossed onto salads, topped with lemon, oil, salt and pepper, or eaten bite-by-bite as you would a stone fruit.

This sweet root vegetable can be sliced and sauteed with a touch of soy sauce, or added to soups or stews to enhance their sweetness. Grilled Kabu produces a brown and crunchy surface combined with a juicy, almost-creamy interior for a palate-pleasing experience.

The leafy greens of Sweet Kabu are tender, sweet and earthy and are often served lightly blanched with a pinch of salt for a light and refreshing side dish, or as a pleasant addition to any salad.

KABOCHA SQUASH

# ZUCCURI

*Cucurbita maxima*

110 days to maturity



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Zuccuri evokes the texture of  
kuri (chestnuts), with a bite  
that crumbles, then melts.



# ZUCCURI

*Cucurbita maxima*

Hearty, tender and bursting with natural sweetness, kabocha squash is a core element of Washoku. Zuccuri is a specific variety of kabocha which is likened to a chestnut (kuri) in its sweetness and texture. This kabocha is packed with flavor and nutrition from its vibrant orange interior to its edible dark green skin. Zuccuri's soft consistency first crumbles and then melts in the mouth, a unique characteristic that comes from its starch content.

## GROWING DETAILS

### **Germination**

- Direct seeding: sow 1–2 seeds every 8", 1/2" deep when daytime temps reach 72° F.
  - Once true leaves emerge, thin to one plant per 18" spacing with 40" between rows.
- Transplanting: Sow 1-2 seeds per cell into a 50- or 72-cell tray.
  - Sow seeds 1/2" deep and cover gently. Avoid pressing firmly as compaction can cause difficulty transplanting.
  - Once established, thin to one plant per cell.
- Over-watering can create a crust-like soil layer, preventing germination. Maintain soil moisture through germination.

### **Transplanting**

- Check for readiness 21-24 days after germination by gently pulling on the base of the stem to see if the soil block stays together. Avoid overgrown seedlings as this will impact future plant growth.
- Transplant to 18" spacing, with 40" between rows.

### **Maintenance**

- Cultivate planting beds to prevent weed competition and avoid sitting water, which can harbor mildew.
- Use of light row cover can maintain heat and prevent pest damage. Remove at flowering.
- Remove early fruits if leaves are less than 12" in diameter to encourage growth.

### **Harvest**

- Harvest when stems turn from green to woody by cutting the fruit stem away from the vine (do not rip fruit stem).
- Cure for peak ripeness by leaving fruits in a protected area away from sunlight. Curing time varies by variety:
  - 817: cure for 30 days.
  - 819: cure for 14 days.

## COOKING DETAILS

Enjoy Zuccuri simmered, sautéed, dipped in tempura batter and fried, or roasted for a saccharine, melt-in-your-mouth sensory experience. This sweet kabocha squash pairs well with warming spices like nutmeg, clove and sage, as well as pears, cilantro, spinach, and parsley. Zuccuri holds its form well when cooked and can be added in cubes to soups, stews, curries and casseroles. For a very simple and fast preparation, try microwaving one-fourth of the Zuccuri (500g approx.) for six minutes.



info@tokitaseed.us



@oishiinippon\_us



www.facebook.com/oishiinipponprojectus



Oishii Nippon Project (US)

(408) 842-4381 | 250 Nagareda Dr. Suite 6, Gilroy, CA 95020

[www.oishiinipponproject.com](http://www.oishiinipponproject.com)

Created by

**TOKITA**

Tokita is a seed company based in Saitama, Japan, with a mission of enhancing our global food culture, connectivity, and health through delicious, productive vegetable varieties. Learn more at [tokitaseed.us](http://tokitaseed.us)