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## with the Littleton Garden Club

### *Cabbage to sauerkraut*

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Littleton Garden Club

Here we are in March, and Saint Patrick's Day on the 17th is coming soon. Corned beef and cabbage are on our minds. This traditional meal is best done in a crock pot. The cabbage you need for sauerkraut has not been planted yet, so buy your St Patty's Day cabbage at the grocery store.

Before we go further, we need to really look at "Cabbage." There are at least seven types: green, red, kale, Savoy, Napa, Chinese, and Brussels sprouts. I like to use Caraflex, also called Pointed Head Cabbage, which is available through Johnny's Select Seeds. It makes a milder, sweeter sauerkraut and a good coleslaw as well.

Any head of cabbage can be used to make sauerkraut with only one other ingredient: salt. The salt-to-cabbage ratio is somewhat flexible - one-half to two teaspoons per pound of cabbage.

There are also other vegetables and spices like carrots or radishes, garlic or ginger, red pepper flakes, or coriander seeds that can be added to sauerkraut. Caraway seeds are best added when you serve the "kraut."

The most important is knowing how to process these ingredients. Core and wash your cabbage, and drain the wash water off before shredding the cabbage with a knife or food processor. Sprinkle the appropriate amount of salt and let it stand for 15-30 minutes - this starts the fermentation process.

Next, massage and pound the cabbage with your hands or a wooden (not metal) utensil. This method should create enough liquid to cover the cabbage. If you need more liquid to cover your cabbage, mix one teaspoon of salt with every cup of additional liquid needed.

Before you begin to make sauerkraut, you need to have a very clean crock or large mason jar and a plan for weighting

the cabbage to keep it covered by liquid. Do not use metal. Opt instead for a grape leaf or a horse-radish leaf to top off your packed cabbage. Then, close a mason jar with a plastic cap or a crock with a pottery lid. The fermentation process can take one to four weeks at room temperature. You need to check it occasionally until it reaches the desired taste.

Once your cabbage has become sauerkraut, you can store it in the refrigerator for a few weeks. Or you can use a traditional canning process to celebrate October Fest with knockwurst, dumplings, and a good bottle of your favorite beer.

If all of this is too overwhelming, check out the recipes for oven-roasted cabbage in the November 2023 issue of Cook's Magazine. Good Gardening and Happy Eating!

For more information about the club and our meetings, please visit [www.littletonnhgardenclub.org](http://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org).