



All carrots can be harvested immature as baby roots, which tend to be crunchy but tender, and quite sweet. They can also be left to reach their full size, shape, and colour, of course. All carrots are high in beta-carotene, a pigment that we metabolize as vitamin A when we eat it. A lack of vitamin A can result in poor vision, hence the notion that carrots are good for your eyesight. Carrots are also rich in Vitamins C, B6, and Niacin.

How to Grow Carrots

Planting

Growing carrots from seed is easy, but there are a couple of tricks to growing really superb carrots. The first challenge facing carrot growers is that the seeds take a relatively long time to germinate. Twelve to fourteen days is not unusual. During this time, the soil needs to be kept evenly moist.

Prepare your carrot bed. Carrots need loose, fluffy soil. Before planting, the soil should be thoroughly loosened with a fork or spade. Stones should be removed. This is a good time to add some organic matter to the bed, but be sure to only use compost or manure that is completely rotted. If the organic matter is too "fresh," it can introduce an overabundance of nitrogen – which is great for beans and lettuce, but not good for root crops.

Start them when the ground is still cool. Once soil warms up later, it's harder to keep the surface layer evenly moist.

Irrigate before planting. Give the bed a good deep watering prior to planting so you don't disturb the shallowly planted seeds.

Use a piece of 1x1 lumber to mark your row. Press the piece lightly into the soil on the diagonal (as opposed to a flat side). This will create a shallow, V-shaped trench. When you drop the seeds into the trench, they tend to roll to the centre, resulting in a very straight row. Carrot seeds are tiny, and notoriously hard to sow evenly. Try not to over-sow. Two seeds per inch of row is ideal.

Barely cover the seeds. Avoid planting carrot seeds more than 5mm (1/4") deep.

Thin your seedlings! It is important that each carrot has enough room to expand in the soil beside its neighbour. When seedlings are 2cm (1") tall, remove enough of them so they stand 4-10cm (1"-4") apart in the row. If carrots are too close to each other, it's common for the roots to wind around one another.

Try to keep your carrots evenly moist throughout the growing season. Watering after a very dry spell tends to result in splitting.

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Diseases & Pests

The Carrot Rust Fly – This pest lays its eggs at the base of the growing carrots. The larva of the fly chews tunnels and unsightly grooves through the surface of the root, causing rot. Unfortunately the damage isn't just cosmetic; the activities of the Carrot Rust Fly larva changes the flavour of the carrot and makes it quite inedible. Use our floating row cover to keep the adults away from the carrots.

Plant after the beginning of June to avoid the first and worst infestation period.

Wireworm – These are the larva of click beetles. They are about an inch and a half long, slender and reddish brown. When squeezed they turn as rigid as a wire, hence the name. Wireworms chew irregular holes through roots, making the carrots inedible. Wireworms prefer a moist soil so preparing your carrot bed so that it is well drained will help. Interplanting with mustard leaf is an excellent way to discourage wireworm damage. The flavour of the mustard is one deterrent, and mustard also helps to dry out the soil, forcing the wireworm away from the roots.

Companion Planting

Plant with bean seeds, Brassicas, chives, leeks, lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, pole beans, radish, rosemary, sage, and tomatoes. Avoid planting with dill, parsnips, and potatoes. Carrots planted near tomatoes may have stunted roots, but will have exceptional flavour. Chives also benefit carrots.

