

CARROTS

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Carrots are a popular vegetable in the home garden. Freshly harvested carrots have a sweeter flavor than carrots bought in the store. Carrots are cold hardy and able to withstand freezing temperatures, which makes them valuable as a fresh vegetable that gardeners can enjoy during the winter months. Carrots can stay in the field for a long time. One planting can easily provide carrots for eight to 10 weeks.

Both a fall and spring crop can be planted. Carrots can be planted from mid-August to early March. Plantings made in mid-August to early October are ready for harvest in late November to February/March, and plantings made in January and February can be harvested in April and May.

Use fresh carrot seeds. Fresh seeds germinate well, resulting in good stands. Store carrot seeds in the freezer. Do not seed carrots too thickly. Crowded stands result in small roots and delay growth. The use of a hand push planter helps obtain the desired spacing. Carrots should be thinned to one plant every 1-2 inches. A trick that gardeners can use to obtain a desired stand is to mix dead seed and live seed together. Carrot seeds are easily killed by baking the seeds in the oven at 400 F for 10-30 minutes. This mixture can then be used to plant the carrots in the garden either by hand or with a planter. Another trick to use to avoid planting carrots too thickly is to spread a mixture of 1 part carrot seeds with 3 or 4 parts soil or sand. Two drills of carrots (spaced 12 inches apart) can be planted on a single row.

Both hybrid and open-pollinated varieties are recommended. Hybrid carrot varieties generally are more uniform and have brighter color than open-pollinated varieties .

Recommended carrot varieties

Open-pollinated Varieties

Danvers 126

Hybrid Varieties

Apache
Choctaw
Enterprise
Maverick
Tasty Peel

For preplant fertilizer, use 4-5 pounds of 13-13-13 or 8-24-24 per 100-foot row. Side-dress carrots twice, three to four weeks after planting and again three to four weeks after the first with 1-2 pounds AmNO_3 or 2-4 pounds CaNO_3 per 100-foot row. Harvest carrots once the roots reach 4-6 inches.

Carrots are subject to compacted soils, which can cause deformed, stubby roots. Adding organic matter and breaking the ground deeply (18-24 inches) before planting will lessen the problem of deformed roots.

