



Carrots

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Carrots are considered ‘root’ vegetables. They are a rich source of beta-carotene, vitamins C and K, potassium and dietary fiber. They are popular as a snack food, salad item, cooked or raw vegetable. There are approximately 35 calories in ½ cup of cooked carrots.



Plant Requirements

Sun	Full Sun - six plus hours of sun daily
Soil	A soil test should be conducted prior to planting. Carrots thrive when soil pH is neutral to slightly acidic, between 6 and 7. Sandy loam soil is best for growing.
Soil Temp	Soil temperature three inches below the surface should be 50 degrees F or higher.

Plant Selection

- Carrots are available as individual seeds or as a “seed tape” - a paper ribbon containing evenly spaced seeds.
- They are available in a variety of colors including white, purple, yellow, orange and red.
- Carrots are available in varying sizes, including finger-sized.
- Days to Maturity - 55 to 75 depending upon variety.

Planting Recommendations

- Plant seeds directly into your garden. Planting in a raised bed can assist with proper water drainage. Wet and compacted soils can deform growth.
- Carrots are considered a ‘cold season’ vegetable so planting can begin April 15th.
- They grow best with cool days (60-75 degrees) and colder nights (45-50 degrees).
- For best development and growth, carrots should have approximately 18-24 inches of well-tilled soil with adequate drainage.
- For a continuous supply of young carrots, make two or three plantings spaced three weeks apart as seeds can take up to three weeks to germinate.

Maintenance

Watering - Keep soil well-watered; one inch of rainfall per week is good. Use a trowel to see how deep the soil is wet. If only an inch or two, continue watering.



Thinning - A newly emerged carrot will appear as two thin grass-like leaves. Once fully emerged, leaves will appear frilly or fern-like. When seedlings are 3 - 4 inches tall, thin by pulling extra seedlings so remaining plants are 2 to 4 inches apart.

Fertilization - Soil can be improved by adding well-rotted manure or compost in spring or fall.

Weeds - Carrots have shallow roots so frequent shallow cultivation or hoeing should be done to control weeds.

Diseases & Insects - <http://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/insect/garden/>

Questions or Problems - What's wrong with my carrot?

<http://apps.extension.umn.edu/garden/diagnose/plant/vegetable/carrot/>

Harvest and Storage

- Irrigate the day before harvest or dig them after a rain to remove the root without damage.
- Finger carrots are usually ready for harvest within 50 to 60 days. Other varieties should be allowed to grow until they reach a diameter of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (about 60 to 75 days).
- Remove the greens and clean the roots before consumption or storage. Store harvested carrots in the refrigerator, above 32 degrees F, for immediate use.
- Carrots may be pickled, canned or frozen for later use.

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Marinated Carrots

Use as a garnish, salad or snack, makes 3 cups.

Ingredients

1 pound carrots	2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard or other grainy mustard	¼ cup olive oil
1 green onion, chopped (include the green top)	1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 clove garlic, crushed	Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Scrub and peel carrots. Julienne, log or slice them.
2. Blanch carrots in 1 quart boiling water for 3-4 minutes or until barely tender, then drain
3. In a small bowl, stir together the lemon juice and mustard.
4. Use a fork or small whisk to beat in olive oil a little bit at a time.
5. Add onions, parsley and garlic.
6. Pour over warm carrots. Taste and season with salt and pepper.