

Carrots

Carrots are a must-have vegetable in any good cook's kitchen. Cooked and eaten on their own, stewed with meats, added to soups and salads, as a part of a delicious pot roast, or served sliced with a dip - there's not much that carrots can't enhance. They're very low in calories, and one cup of carrots provides 428% of your daily Vitamin A requirement. There are even varieties of carrots that do well in clay soils.

Growing: When/Where to Plant

Sow carrot seeds two to four weeks before the last frost date. Carrots do best when grown at temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees; they are a biennial grown as an annual.

How to Plant

Direct-sow seeds, spacing them 2 inches apart. Cover with 1/4 inch of sifted compost or fine potting soil and keep soil moist. Carrots can take up to 3 weeks to germinate, and need to be thinned at least twice during growing season. Carrots are not drought tolerant and seeds need constant moisture - once seedlings appear, water deeply every few days. They don't compete well with weeds, so hand weed them, especially early in the season. Apply an organic mulch (straw is good) to conserve soil moisture and prevent more weed growth.

Soil Requirements/Fertilizer

To extend their roots into the soil and grow their best, carrots need a fertile sandy loam raked free of rocks. Work in a 1-2 inch layer of compost before planting. Avoid adding a high-nitrogen fertilizer, which will cause excessive top growth and forked roots. Take a soil test and follow the recommendations.

Harvesting

Begin pulling carrots as soon as they're at full color. If the tops pull off, leaving the root in the soil, just use a small hand shovel and dig gently into soil to release the carrot.

Special Notes Good varieties for this area are: **Baby** - Parmex (50 days), Thumbelina (65 days); **Chantenay** - Short 'n sweet (68 days), Kuroda (70 days); **Danvers** - Danvers 126 (70 days), Danvers Half Long (78 days); **Nantes**: Ithaca Hybrid (65 days), Scarlet Nantes (70 days)

MORE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION:

Central NC Planting Calendar for Annual Vegetables, Fruits and Herbs

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/central-north-carolina-planting-calendar-for-annual-vegetables-fruits-and-herbs>

NC Extension Gardener Handbook – chapter 16, Vegetable Gardening

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/extension-gardener-handbook/16-vegetable-gardening>

Vegetable Gardening: A Beginner's Guide

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/home-vegetable-gardening-a-quick-reference-guide>

NC Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox: <https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/daucus-carota-subsp-sativus>

LIST COMPILED AND DISTRIBUTED BY NC STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERSM VOLUNTEERS, GUILFORD COUNTY
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