



Because Life Should Be Beautiful™

Carrots

Carrots have been renowned for over 2000 years for their health giving properties and high vitamin A content. After potatoes, carrots are without doubt our best known and best loved root vegetable. In the days when vegetables were served merely as an accessory to meat, carrots always made an appearance. Often overcooked but still eaten up because, we were told, they helped you see in the dark.

Carrots have many different flavors, depending on how they are cooked. Young, new season carrots braised in butter and a splash of water are intensely flavored and sweet. When steamed, they are tender and melting. Carrots grated into salads are fresh and clean tasting, while in casseroles they are savory with the characteristic carrot flavor. In soups they are fragrant and mild, and in cakes their flavor can hardly be detected, yet their sweetness adds richness.

Seeds germinate best under cool moist conditions in the fall and spring, but maybe started in slightly warmer weather if the soil is kept moist. Use or prepare soil that is deep and fraible to avoid misshapen roots. Do not plant in area where young plants may be subject to long periods of cold temperatures, which favor bolting. Thin so that plant roots are 1 to 2 inches apart in a row.

For harvesting, depending on variety, pull when about 3/4" to 1 1/2" in diameter. The top of the carrot will show at the soil line and you can gauge when diameter looks correct for the variety. If the diameter looks good, chances are the length is fine too.

Carrots can be stored in the ground during cool winter months, unless freezes are expected. If frosts are predicted dig up and store the carrots. If carrots are left too long in the soil or allowed to over mature, the roots become tough, woody, and may crack.

Carrots contain large amounts of carotene and vitamin A, along with useful amounts of vitamin B3, C, and E. When eaten raw, they also provide good quantities of potassium, calcium, iron, and zinc, but these are reduced when carrots are boiled.

Holtville, CA calls itself the "Carrot capital of the world" and to acknowledge such a prestigious title holds the annual Carrot Festival every year since 1948 in late January. They refer to it as "The annual community salute to the carrot. " The carrot festival comprises a week long schedule of events, culminating in a hugely entertaining carnival.