



Homegrown CARROTS

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Homegrown carrots have a unique freshness and juiciness to them and are much more flavorful than their store-purchased counterparts. Carrot varieties are available in an assortment of colors, shapes, and sizes. From the traditional long, tapered shoots to the short, blunt, stubby varieties, all carrot types can be grown throughout the state of Georgia. This cool season crop makes a great addition to the home garden.



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Planting

Carrots prefer loamy, loose soil and do best in raised beds rather than in heavy clay soils. A cool season vegetable, carrots can be grown in either the fall or the early spring. Carrots prefer soil temperatures between 55 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit for good seed germination. Before planting, a soil test should be performed in order to obtain the most accurate recommendations on fertility. **Soil testing instructions can be found at extension.uga.edu.** In the absence of a soil test, apply 30 pounds of 5-10-10 fertilizer per 1,000 square feet of planting area.

Carrots can tolerate wide-ranging soil pH levels, from 5.8 to 6.7. The seeds can be directly sown into the garden, but be mindful that they are very small. Moisten the soil slightly to help prevent the seeds from blowing away. Cover the seeds with a shallow, quarter-inch of fine soil and water again lightly, being careful not to wash away the soil covering the seeds. When the carrots reach about 1 inch in height, thin them to 2 inches between plants.

Maintenance

When your carrots are 4 inches tall, fertilize at a rate of 1 pound of 34-0-0 or an equivalent per 100 feet of row. Provide carrots with a uniform supply of moisture. Water long enough to penetrate the soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. If uniform water is not provided, growth cracks, strong flavor, and coarseness may develop in the root. Use straw or other organic mulch between the rows to help maintain adequate moisture and reduce weeds. Hand pulling or using a hoe are effective and safe weed control methods.

Harvesting and storage

Your crop should be ready to harvest between 60 and 75 days, depending on the variety. Ripe carrots will begin to protrude out of the ground and develop a rich color when they are ready to harvest. Be careful not to let them overmature. When left in the soil too long, they can become extremely tough and bitter tasting. Remove the green tops and store in the refrigerator for up to several months.

Problems

Disease and insect problems are rarely an issue for homegrown carrots. Occasionally, caterpillars or leaf hoppers feed on the foliage as carrots are developing. These pests can be treated with over-the-counter labeled insecticides. Root-knot nematodes can be a problem for carrots when they are present in the soil. Yearly crop rotation to a different area of the garden will help control nematodes.

Suggested Varieties

Variety	Maturity Date	Comments
Royal Chantenay	70 Days	Stubby shape; good for heavy soils
Scarlet Nantes	68 Days	Long and narrow; good for sandy soils or raised beds
Moonraker	70 Days	8-9 inch, heavy conical shape
Goldfinger	69 Days	Short, 7-inch carrots; can handle heavy and sandy soils
Thumbelina (small)	70 Days	Short, round carrot; excellent for heavy soils
Atlas	70 Days	Short, 2-inch round carrot; excellent for shallow soils
Hercules	65 Days	Widely adaptable to most soils; 6-7 inch carrot
Bolero	75 Days	Heavy, blunt-shape carrot; stores well after harvest

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Circular 1232

July 2021

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