

Cultural Details: Carrots

VHT010

Introduction

Carrots can be cropped in succession through the year, allowing harvest from late spring through to late winter. They are divided into categories depending on their shape and maturity.

Amsterdam Types: These are the earliest to crop and produce narrow, cylindrical, stump-ended roots with smooth skins and small in size, ideal for forcing.

Nantes Types: Similar shape to Amsterdam types, although longer and broader. Suitable for early crops, forcing as for Amsterdam types as well as for use as later crops.

Chantenay Cultivars: Are short, broad and conical in shape. Suitable for main crops for summer and autumn lifting.

Berlicum Types: These produce long, large roots, great for winter use.

Autumn King Types: Great for long season into winter, producing the longest tapered carrots on the market.

Baby Types: All of these types have been used as parent material in breeding F1 hybrids with mixed high quality characteristics. Also available are ball rooted cultivars such as Paris Market Atlas as well as small baby varieties both of which are suitable for shallow soils and container raising where space is limited.

Sowing & Growing

Carrot seed should be sown into deep, fine, rather sandy, fertile soil with a pH of 6.5 – 7.5. The soil should not have been manured in the past year; ideally it will have been manured for a previous crop. If the ground has been manured in the past year DO NOT grow carrots at all.

Sow the carrot seed thinly into drills 2cm deep. Light sowing of seed will mean less thinning later. The rows should be spaced at 12cm apart for optimum performance. When seedlings appear strong, thin them out to leave carrots 2.5cm apart. It is best to thin seedlings in the evening when carrot fly are not around, as it's the odour of bruised leaves which attracts them.

For spring cropping sow outdoors in mid-autumn or under protection in mid-winter. Early summer lifting's can be sown outdoors from mid spring, germinating when soil temperatures reach 7.5oC. Soil temperatures can be raised with the aid of cloches, fleece or plastic film coverings. Sowing seeds into modules is another way to obtain early cropping. Sowing in early spring to early summer will hopefully avoid the most harmful hatchings of the carrot fly.

Keep the ground around the carrots weed-free by hand. As foliage develops the leaf canopy will suppress the annual weeds. Water during dry spells, paying careful attention not to over water as this can cause splitting of the roots and encourages leaf growth. Additional feeding should not be necessary on well prepared sites.

Harvest

The first roots can be lifted when they are 12-15mm in diameter, remembering roots will continue to grow as the seasonal temperature rises. Use a fork to lift, being careful not to damage the carrots. For winter, carrots can either be lifted in October or stored with leaves removed in crates packed in dry peat, or left in the ground ensuring the crowns are covered with a secure layer of straw to protect them from the frosts.



Common Problems, Pests & Diseases

Carrot Fly

Carrot Willow Aphid

Motley Dwarf Virus

Swift Moth

Green Top

Forked Roots

Splitting

Violet Root Rot

Black Rot

Sclerotinia Rot

Downy Mildew

Powdery Mildew

Information provided for guidance only, as cultural practices and climatic circumstances vary.