

Carrots



Sun: Plant in full sun (6 to 8 hours). Space 1 to 2 inches apart within rows or 5 to 6 plants per 2- to 3-gallon container. Plant in March for spring harvest (4 to 6 weeks before anticipated last spring freeze) and in July to September for fall harvest.

Soil: Amend with organic matter to create a well-drained soil. Avoid planting in unamended sandy or heavy clay soils. If the soil test shows pH is below 6.2, apply lime in January as recommended.

For proper drainage in a container garden, use potting mix and ensure containers have drainage holes. Alternatively, consider using self-watering containers.

Water: Keep soil consistently moist but not saturated. Apply 1 to 2 inches of water each week. Avoid wetting leaves to prevent fungal disease. Mulch helps retain moisture.

Plant: Direct sow seeds thick and shallow, not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep. After the sprouts are 1 inch tall, thin to 2-inch spacing.

Fertilize: In the absence of a soil test, apply an all-purpose fertilizer (8-8-8 or 10-10-10) at planting, according to label directions. Reapply beside plants, 4 to 6 inches from the stem (side-dress), 4 to 6 weeks after planting.

Insects/Diseases/Weeds: Scout plants frequently for insect/disease damage. Use insecticidal soap (for soft-bodied insects) or Bt dust or spray (for caterpillars, or worms). Spray fungicide regularly to suppress common fungal diseases. Always follow label instructions. Mulch inhibits weeds and diseases.

Harvest: Harvest at 60 to 80 days, when the root crown is about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in diameter. Harvest time varies depending on the variety.

Other: Carrot seeds sprout slowly; keep the soil moist until sprouts appear. Watering fluctuations cause carrots to crack, be of poor quality, and sometimes rot.

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