

CARROT

Daucus carota var. sativus

Apiaceae

ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

Description

Carrots have been a cultivated crop in Western Asia since the 10th century A.D. They were originally used only medicinally. In general, Carrots are a crop for temperate climates. The Danvers 126 variety, a 60-70 day variety performs well, in heavy, clay soils. Scarlet Nantes is an open pollinated variety with bright orange, slightly tapered roots about 6 inches in length.

Uses

The sweet roots are eaten either raw or cooked though all parts of the Carrot plant are edible. In Java, the leaves are sometimes eaten. Both the tops and the roots have been used as small animal and livestock fodder.

Common Names

- Spanish
 - Zanohoria
 - Zanahoria
- French
 - carotte

Cultivation

- Elevation: For economic yields, carrots should be grown in tropical regions at altitudes above 1200 m (4,000 ft) or during the cool winter months in the subtropics
- Rainfall: average rainfall of 310-410 mm (12-16 in)
- Temperature: 10-30° C (50-86° F)
- Soil: well drained, fertile and of a sandy texture Tiny carrot seeds germinate best rather early in a cool season. Plant in light, well-drained soil or in raised ridges to allow the large root to expand and lengthen.

Keep early weeds under control and provide a steady supply of moisture. In heavy, clay soil, a board may be laid over the row until most seeds have germinated. Rapid growth makes Carrots taste better and have better texture. Plant 3-4 seeds every 5 cm. (2 in) at a depth of 1 cm (0.5 in). The seeds of a fast growing root crop like radishes can be mixed with Carrot seeds. As radishes are harvested, the Carrots are thinned out. In the tropics, light afternoon shade may be needed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Carrots may be dug or "lifted" from the soil with a fork, 90-110 days after planting. This harvested vegetable will still be edible after several months if kept at 0.5°C (33° F). After a frost, Carrots may be left in the ground with a covering of straw and harvested before the ground freezes. Seed yields are increased significantly by placing beehives near the field during flowering.

Pests and Diseases

Because celery is of the same family as Carrots, do not follow one crop with another as they are susceptible to the same diseases and pests. Alternaria blight will defoliate Carrots in hot, humid weather. Bacterial soft rot results from poor drainage. If evidence of these diseases or root-knot nematode is present, before another season's crop is planted, it would be wise to rotate the Carrot crop to a new location. Digging organic matter into the soil and planting on ridges or raised beds may reduce damage from nematodes.

Cooking and Nutrition

Because Carrots contain a high amount of carotene, which is converted in the human body into Vitamin A, it is a very valuable crop for a family to grow in their garden. When eaten raw, the greatest amount of carotene is retained because vitamin A is soluble in water and may be discarded in the cooking water. The roots can be made into a juice, a sweet syrup, or a fermented drink. Flour is made from the dried pounded roots, or tops and roots can be added to soups or stews.

References

<http://ecocrop.fao.org/ecocrop/srv/en/cropView?id=871>