



Carrots

Climatic requirements

Carrot is a root crop that can be grown year-round in Hawaii, although the best quality carrots are produced during the cooler months. Carrots do best under cool growing conditions, at temperatures between 60 and 70°F. Temperatures over 75°F tend to produce shorter, lighter-colored roots with strong flavor. Carrots grown in the warmer lowlands usually have a lighter root color, shorter roots, and stronger flavor than the same variety grown at higher, cooler elevations.

Varieties

The 'Nantes' strains are the best from the standpoint of quality. Long-rooted varieties develop poor, misshapen roots. 'Chantenay' and 'Danvers Half-Long' strains yield heavily, but the roots are not of the best quality.

Soil management and fertilizers

Carrots grow well in loose, deep soil free of clods, stones, and trash. The soil should be well drained, free of nematodes, and have a pH of 5.7 to 7. If manure is used, apply it several weeks in advance of planting, because fresh manure or inorganic fertilizer placed too near the roots will cause deformed or forked roots. Apply garden fertilizer such as 10-30-10 at the rate of 1½–2 pounds per 100 square feet. Supply the fertilizer in two applications: one-half at the time of seeding and the other half four weeks later.

Planting

One of the greatest problems in growing carrots is to get a good stand of plants. The seeds are small and germinate slowly and irregularly. The seedlings are delicate. Few seedlings will emerge if the soil is crusty.

Plant carrot seeds ¼ inch deep in heavy soils and ½ inch deep in light soils. Scatter the seeds lightly and sparsely over a strip 3–4 inches wide, with the strips spaced

12–15 inches apart. Thick stands must be hand-thinned to give roots enough room to expand normally. Spacing between plants should be 2–4 inches.

Irrigation and cultivation

Give the crop a steady supply of water. Overirrigation may produce light-colored roots with enlarged lenticels, which give carrots a rough appearance. Prolonged periods of drought followed by irrigation may cause growth cracks on roots. Cultivate to control weeds whenever necessary. Carrots are sensitive to weed competition, so start weeding as soon as weeds emerge.

Insect control

The most common insect pests of carrots are mealybugs, aphids, cutworms, and wire worms. Vegetable weevils may become troublesome at higher elevations. All of these pests can be controlled to some degree with applications of insecticides^z.

Disease control

Early blight and late blight are the two most common diseases of carrots. Numerous spots appear as circles on the leaves. A serious outbreak of blight may cause withering of the whole top of the carrot. Blights become serious especially during wet weather. Blights can be controlled by weekly spraying with fungicides^z.

Root knot nematode is a serious soil-borne pest of carrots. Nematodes will cause galling and deformed roots. Nematodes may be controlled by using pre-plant soil treatment with nematicides^z.

Harvesting

Carrots should be harvested four months after planting. Carrots grown more than four months become woody and tough.

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^zRead any pesticide's label carefully to ensure that its use on carrots is allowed, and follow the label directions.

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