

Example Packets



What you will need

- Johnsons seeds
- A garden spade or fork
- A rake



Johnsons
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A quick guide to



Hints and Tips

- Keep root vegetables well watered to prevent roots from splitting.
- Water well after thinning out to wash dislodged soil back around the remaining roots.
- To minimise the risk of carrot fly attacks remove thinnings immediately. It is also worth trying a variety such as Carrot Flyaway F1 which has been specially bred to deter carrot fly.



- Some carrots can be left in the ground to overwinter, these will benefit from protection with a cloche, straw or soil banked up over the roots.
- To save time spent thinning out beetroots, look out for monogerm

varieties which can be sown more thinly.

- To store surplus roots, remove excess soil, being careful not to damage them, then place in a box between layers of sand and keep in a cool shaded location outdoors.

Companion Planting for Root Vegetables

Growing carrots near to strongly scented sage, rosemary or onion crops helps to confuse and deter carrot fly which rely on scent.

Root vegetables often benefit from growing alongside chives, lettuce, radish and tomatoes.



Recipes

Beetroot Salad and Soup:

Steam beets, cool and slice. Add shredded red cabbage, sliced red onion and walnuts then serve with a dill dressing, great with smoked fish. For soup, chop beets and onion, fry until soft and season. Add beef stock then cook until tender. Stir in a little natural yogurt and serve.

Carrot Salad:

Finely shred red cabbage and slice carrots across the root. Combine in a bowl and dress with olive oil and cider vinegar, season with black pepper and toasted cumin seeds. Delicious served with cold pork or gammon.

Root Vegetable Rosti:

Grate equal quantities of celeriac, radish and carrot into a bowl, add plain flour and olive oil to bind the ingredients together. Season with salt and pepper. Shape the rosti into small cakes and fry until browned. Serve with sour cream flavoured with a little mustard.





Types of Root Vegetables

Beetroot have a much loved, distinctively sweet and earthy flavour. Usually deep red and rounded, there are also golden yellow varieties such as Burpees Golden, attractive varieties with two tone flesh and cylindrical types such as the aptly named Cylindra.

Carrots are more diverse than they might at first appear. They are available in a range of colours from creamy white through oranges to red and purple and in a variety of shapes and sizes. There are unusual round varieties such as Paris Market, and short conical Chantenays, both of which are a good choice for shallow or stony soil, or growing in patio containers. There are blunt ended early Nantes varieties and tapered maincrop Autumn King or winter hardy Emperor types. The flavour changes subtly from one variety to another. It is well worth trying a range of different types to find your favourites and to give the longest possible harvest season.

Parsnips and Swedes are traditional winter crops that can be harvested when there is little else still available in the garden. Many varieties have been bred to resist common diseases, to provide crops of good quality roots. The vigour of parsnip seeds begins to diminish after a year, so it is worth using fresh seeds when sowing. Parsnips tend to be quite large and long rooted, so appreciate a deeply dug soil.

Radishes are probably the fastest and easiest to grow of all root vegetables with repeated sowings providing continuous crops of fresh and succulent young roots. It is often the case that the more mature the roots are the hotter they become. Available in a great range of shapes and often vivid colours, they can turn any simple salad into an eye-catching dish. They are also great on their own as a fresh and tangy summer snack.

Turnips have been an important root crop for centuries but are sadly underrated today. They are fast maturing and easy to grow. Young roots have a mild, sweet flavour and are superb in stews, casseroles or roasted. Other types of root vegetables include hamburger parsley which has a succulent root with a wonderful, mild parsley flavour, it can be used in the same way as parsnips. Celeriac is also grown as a root vegetable and has a delicate celery flavour which is delicious in soups, stews, casseroles and baked dishes such as a gratin.

Root Vegetables



Where

Root vegetables are one of the most satisfying vegetables to grow, although the quality of the crop is to a large extent determined by the condition of the soil. It therefore pays to prepare the soil well in

fertiliser a fortnight before sowing is beneficial. Quick growing crops such as radishes make great 'catch crops', they can be sown amongst rows of slower growing vegetables such as parsnips, to make best use of space.



autumn. Root vegetables generally grow best in light sandy soils, if you have particularly stony or heavy soil that doesn't drain well, best results can be achieved with short rooted types, these are also ideal for container growing.

Root vegetables are easily sown directly into a well prepared seed bed in their growing position. The soil should not be manured but raking in a small amount of general

How

Before sowing outdoors, the soil should be prepared. It is best dug over in the autumn, removing any stones and working it to a fine, loose consistency. For long roots it needs to be dug to a good depth. It is best to sow in rows so that it is easier to identify the seedlings as they emerge. The seeds should then be lightly covered with fine soil and watered gently so they

are not disturbed. Don't forget to use your free Johnsons seed label to identify the variety sown. To maximise the harvest season it is best to make repeat sowings at 2 to 3 week intervals. Cloche protection of early and late sowings of beetroot, carrots and radishes will help to extend the growing season.



Care

Once seedlings sown outdoors are large enough to handle they need to be thinned out to the spacing indicated on the packet. It is best to remove the weaker seedlings leaving the stronger ones the room they need to grow on. Thinning also improves air circulation around the young plants, reducing the chance of disease. If sown thinly, further thinning of beetroot, carrots and radishes can be done gradually by harvesting alternate roots from the row, these can be used in salads or as baby veg. However it's best not to delay the thinning out of parsnips, swedes and turnips.

The soil needs to be kept moist (but not wet) and weed free.

Harvesting

It is best to begin harvesting beetroot when they reach golf ball size, it is advisable to twist the leaves off rather than cutting them to prevent the sap from bleeding. The tasty young leaves of beetroot and even carrots can be harvested for salads, take only a few leaves from each plant.

Beetroots, radishes and most varieties of carrots still in the ground in late autumn are best lifted before the first frosts. Parsnips and swedes however can be left in the ground and harvested over the winter months, frost will improve their flavour.

