

Growing Guide: Carrots



Top 5 Reasons to Grow Carrots

1. Easy to plant – sow directly into soil or a deep container, no transplanting necessary
2. Nutritious – rich in vitamin A, calcium and good source of fibre
3. Stores well – can be eaten all year round
4. Tons of variety – available in lots of different colours such as red, yellow, black and purple (so you'll never get bored of growing them!)
5. Sweet & savoury – carrots have natural sugar in them so they taste fantastic in cakes as well as your Sunday roast

Step 1: Sowing

When to Sow: You can sow carrots any time from March to August, but they grow better if you wait until April when the weather's warmer.

Where to Sow: Carrots don't like to be moved once sown so you can sow them directly into the soil or a deep container. Place them in an open, sunny space for best results.

How to Sow: Apply a general-purpose organic fertiliser about two weeks before sowing. Make a little drill 2cm deep and sow the seeds in it. Cover back over with soil. If you've more than one row, keep them 20cm apart. Carrots are slow to germinate so don't be alarmed if nothing seems to be happening! It could take 2-3 weeks.

Sowing Tip: Keep the seedbed or container moist to encourage germination.

Step 2: Growing

Once germinated you will only need to water carrots in very dry weather (every 2-3 weeks). In fact, the drier it is the deeper the carrot root will grow looking for water which means bigger carrots! Once they have started to grow, 'thin out' until you have about 5cm between seedlings.

Growing Tip: Carrots dislike competition from weeds so keep the bed weed free – use a hoe along the rows and hand-weed around the carrots

Step 3 - Harvest

When to Harvest: Baby carrots will be ready about 7 weeks after sowing, and you can leave the rest behind to grow more (maincrop varieties take about 11-12 weeks).

Harvesting Tip: It's best to use a garden fork to get the carrots out. You might break them if you try to pull them out by hand.

GIY Tips

- » Carrot seeds are tiny and if the soil is lumpy they can fall down into the cracks between lumps! So you need to get the soil nice and flat by raking it
- » Carrots go green if exposed to the light so cover any exposed tops with soil
- » Try sowing carrots into toilet role before inserting into compost