

Growing Carrots



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Adapted From ID-128 *Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky*

Carrots are rich in vitamin A, thiamine and riboflavin. They may be cooked or eaten raw. Varieties with extremely long roots are not recommended for home gardens.

Fertilizers

Carrots do not need additional fertilizers, especially nitrogen.

Planting

You can plant carrots from March 15 until the first of July. Sowing at three-week intervals will assure a continuous supply.

Plant seed 1/4 inch deep in rows 18 inches or more apart. Since carrot seed is slow to germinate, radish seed is often mixed with it. The radishes will mark the row and break the soil crust, making it easier for the carrots to emerge. Thin carrots to 2 to 3 inches between plants after the seedlings are 1 to 2 inches tall.

Cultivation

Keep carrots weed free. They can benefit from a light layer of mulch.

Harvesting

Carrots may be harvested when they reach the desired size. Harvest fall-planted carrots before freezing weather.

Storage

Wash the roots, trim tops to 1/2 inch and store in perforated plastic bags in the refrigerator, a cold, moist cellar or pit. Carrots will keep from two to four months. Do not store carrots in the same room as apples. Apples give off ethylene, which causes carrots to become bitter.

Diseases

None are problematic.

Insects

Aphids are black, red or green, soft-bodied insects grouped in colonies on leaves and stems. Most individuals in a colony are wingless. By sucking the sap, they cause leaves to wilt, curl, pucker, stunt or yellow. Aphids produce "honeydew" which falls on leaves, making them sticky. Sooty mold may develop on honeydew deposits. Some aphids transmit viruses. Some whitish or bluish aphids also feed on beet roots but do not seem to be a serious problem. Refer to the footnote below for treatment options.

Cutworms—Cutworms are dull-colored, smooth caterpillars that cut off plants above, at or below ground level. Some climb plants and feed on leaves, buds or fruit. Underground types are particularly destructive to young pepper, tomato, cabbage, pea, bean and squash plants. Use a 6-inch diameter cardboard collar 3 inches high, pushed into the soil 1 inch after planting transplants.

Prepare beds and eliminate weeds at least two weeks before planting. Bait formulations, sometimes using bran or applying rolled oats with molasses containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, have been known to effectively control cutworm species when applied to the soil.

Flea Beetles—Flea beetles are tiny jumping beetles about 1/10 inch long. There are many species. They eat shot holes in potato, tomato, eggplant, pepper, beet, spinach, turnip, radish, cabbage and other crops. Young transplants are often damaged severely. Thin floating row cover can exclude flea beetles from plants and can be left in place until harvest on most crops.

Root Maggots—There are several kinds of root maggots, including seed-corn maggot, cabbage maggot and onion maggot. They are whitish, legless, somewhat peg-shaped and without a distinct head. They tunnel roots, stems, bulbs or seeds and cause rot in the injured parts. Adults resemble house flies in appearance. Delay planting until soil conditions favor rapid germination of seeds and avoid sowing seed too deeply to minimize losses to seed-corn maggots.

Apply diatomaceous earth around the base of the seedlings at planting and following each rain early in the season. Thin floating row covers can prevent infestation by root maggot populations when placed over transplants or seedlings.

Sowbugs—Sowbugs are insect relatives that roll into a ball when disturbed. They feed mostly on decaying organic matter, but also damage root hairs, or ripe tomatoes resting on the ground. Heavily mulched gardens and areas near compost heaps usually have more problems with this pest. Clean up ground litter under which sowbugs hide during the day. Don't compost next to the garden.

Insect Treatments

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Insect Treatments:

- 2. Pyrethrins,**
- 3. Imidacloprid (Bioadvanced Fruit, Citrus, Vegetalbe Insect Control),**
- 4. Cyfluthrin (Bioadvanced Vegetable and Garden Insect Spray),**
- 8. Insecticidal soap,**
- 9. Neem,**
- 13. Spinosad (Captain Jacks Dead Bug Brew),**

Recommended Vegetable Cultivars

Cultivar	Days to Maturity
Pioneer	67
Fanci Pak	70
Danvers Half Long	75
Gold Pak	76
Imperator	77