

Carrots



The wild carrot - *Daucus Carota* - is one of the many plants which belong to the Umbelliferae family which includes parsley, celery, parsnip, fennel, dill and coriander.

It is a common plant in pastures and by roadsides and prefers light sandy soils.

The carrot originated some 5000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan, and slowly spread into the Mediterranean area. The first carrots were white, purple, red, yellow, green and black - not orange. Its roots were thin and turnip

shaped.

Carrots are in the parsley family and as such, you can eat carrot tops the same way you would parsley, although the flavor is somewhat different. Use the tops in stews and soups, or chop them finely to give a unique, carrot-like flavor to salads.

Carrots may be planted up to 6 seed lines per 42 inch bed, usually 1½ inches apart. There are several variations of the number of lines, spacing between lines and bed width depending upon the ultimate use of the product. A ballpark value is 38-42 plants per foot of bed for fresh market carrots.

Carrots may be sown at a rate of 1,000,000 seed per acre.

There are about 300,000 carrot seeds per pound.

Carrots have been grown on many of the soil types in the Yuma area. However, best root development is obtained with the lighter, sandy-textured soils. If soils contain too much clay, deformed and hairy roots may result.

Deep orange colored roots will not develop properly if the soil stays too wet.

The majority of the carrots are harvested by machines, however, a small acreage is hand bunched (with tops intact).

Carrot roots are vulnerable to forking if too much nitrogen is applied.

Carrots are sprinkler irrigated for stand establishment. Carrots germinate slowly and the beds must be kept moist to prevent crusting. They may take as long as 10 days to germinate in cool weather. Sprinklers also reduce salinity, which is important, since carrots are very sensitive to salt.

In 2005, Yuma County carrot acreage totaled about 200 acres, about 1/10 the acreage found in Imperial Valley.

Cut some carrot flowers, put them in a glass with water colored with food dye and watch the blooms change color.

Researchers at the USDA found that those who consumed 2 carrots a day were able to lower their cholesterol levels about 20 percent due to a soluble fiber found in carrots called calcium pectate.

In 1990, Crayola added the neon carrot color to its range of crayons.

There are 10 mg of Vitamin A from 20 carrots and as much calcium in 9 carrots as there is in a glass (250ml) of whole milk.

Carrots have the highest content of beta carotene (vitamin A) of all vegetables.

The wild carrot is called, Queen Annes Lace.

The longest carrot ever recorded was over 16 feet long and weighed over 18 pounds.

There is a carrot pie flavored jelly bean.

Carrots were first grown as a medicine not a food.

Carrots produce more distilled alcohol than potatoes.

Carrots are not always orange and can also be found in purple, white, red or yellow.

Today, we eat more carrots than ever; over 10 pounds per person in the US.

Cooking breaks down a carrot's fiber, making the beta carotene and sugars easier to digest. A cooked carrot, contrary to most other vegetables, is more nutritious than its raw counterpart. Other nutrients that carrots provide in abundance are Vitamin C, Vitamin K, fiber and potassium.

Carrots have been shown to help lower blood pressure if eaten regularly.

Carrots were the first vegetable to be canned commercially.

Fresh carrots soaked in hot water to which various flavors have been added (usually salt and spices) soak up the flavor along with the water, making an interesting snack.

If you eat too many carrots, you'll turn orange. That's a fact, not something to scare your kids with (or maybe it is, but you want them to eat carrots).

Pound for pound, carrots are in the same "cost versus nutrition" category as cabbage, potatoes and pumpkins. That means you get a lot of food and a lot of nutrition for your money.

If you buy carrots with the tops still on, cut them off before storing. Not only will the fresh tops go limp, they'll pull moisture from the roots and cause them to wilt and may only store for only two weeks in the refrigerator. Mature, topped carrots have a much longer shelf life, if stored properly. At 34 F, carrots may be stored for up to five months.

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