

CARROT PLANTING GUIDE



Daucus carota

Carrot is a hardy biennial root vegetable usually grown as an annual crop. It is a popular vegetable eaten raw as a salad or cooked in stew. Locally carrots are grown under rain fed and irrigated conditions mainly for fresh domestic market, processing and little for export.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Carrot is a cool season crop and can tolerate warmer conditions.

Temperatures during the growing period greatly affect seed germination, taste and colour of the roots.

The optimum temperature for seed germination is 25-30°C, while for growth and good colour development of the roots, the optimum temperature is 16°C. Very high temperatures retard growth while very low temperatures encourage bolting at an early age.

Also high temperatures result in pale, short roots.

Altitude 500m -2000m above sea level.

Carrots require well drained, light loam soils for good root development.



PROPAGATION

Carrots are directly sown in the seeds bed which should be well prepared to fine tilth.

The seeds should be drilled thinly along the rows which are spaced 30cm apart.

When the plants are 5-8 cm they should be thinned to 4-7cm depending on the vigour of the cultivar.

Farming carrots under irrigation can be synchronized with the market demand for maximum benefits to the farmer.



MANURE AND FERTILIZER APPLICATION

Manure application for carrot production is undesirable as it causes forking.

Carrots do not need high nitrogen levels as this stimulates the top growth at the expense of root growth, delays harvesting and promotes development of leaf diseases. However, carrots respond well to phosphatic fertilizers.

Apply the fertilizers after taking a soil taking soil test in order to come up with the right fertilizer program.



- **First top dressing starts 2 Weeks;** after germination, with 50kg of AN or 100kg Potassium Nitrate per hectare.
- **Next top dressings in Weeks 3, 5 – 6;** use Potassium Nitrate at 25kg a hectare, Calcium Nitrate at 40kgs per hectare and Magnesium Sulphate at 10kg a hectare.
- **From weeks 7,8,9 &10** apply Magnesium Sulphate at 14kg per hectare, Potassium Sulphate for 50 for 1 hectare and Calcium Sulphate at 25kgs a hectare.
- **About 2 Weeks before harvest** apply Magnesium Sulphate at 14kg a hectare and Potassium Sulphate at 50kg a hectare.
High Potassium applications ensures a better quality, crisper, better colored carrot and enhances the keeping quality.

HARVESTING

Carrots mature in 3 to 4 months after planting. Just before harvesting it is recommended to irrigate the crop to reduce roots damage during harvesting. The roots are dug out, washed and packaged in clean containers before marketing. Carrots lifted by hand with a fork require careful placement or otherwise too many carrots will be damaged by the spikes of the fork.

