

## How to Grow Beets

### General

Beets are incredibly healthy eating. Both the roots and the leaves are an excellent source of antioxidants, minerals, and vitamin C. They also contain betaine, a compound that is essential for cardiovascular health. Eat them raw, cooked, and pickled - you can even make beet chips!

### Latin

*Beta vulgaris*

Family: Amaranthaceae

### Difficulty

Easy

**We Recommend:** Chioggia It's hard to pick a favourite beet because they all have winning qualities. But slice into a Chioggia beet, and discover a party going on inside! It's certainly one of the most festive looking of all garden vegetables, and it tastes wonderful, too.

### Season & Zone

**Season:** Cool Season

**Exposure:** Full-sun or partial-shade

**Zone:** Hardy to Zone 5

### Timing

Direct sow late April to mid-July. Beets will not produce roots if planted when the soil is too cold. Seeds will germinate in 5-12 days, depending on soil temperature. Optimal soil temperature: 10-26°C (50-80°F).

### Starting

Sow 1cm (½") deep, 5-10cm (2-4") apart in rows 30-45cm (12-18") apart.

### Growing

Ideal pH: 6.0-6.8. For uniformly sized beets, thin carefully to 7-15cm (3-6") apart when seedlings are 5cm (2") tall. Eat thinned plants, roots and all. Root size is controlled by spacing and variety.

### Harvest

Harvest at any size, but for the best flavour, pull the beets as soon as they have reached full-size. Eat the greens too. Store in the ground, or in moist peat or sand just above freezing.

### Seed Info

In optimum conditions at least 75% of seeds will germinate. Usual seed life: 3 years. Per 100' row: 600-1M seeds, per acre: 436M seeds.

### Diseases & Pests

Circular lesions with a purple halo on the leaf is cercospora leaf spot. Prevent by rotation and sanitation. Leaf miner maggots cause blistered grey tunnels in leaves. Just squish them inside the leaf. Floating row cover carefully applied will prevent the leaf miner fly from laying its eggs.

### Companion Planting

Beets add minerals to the soil. The greens are very good for the compost. Plant with bush beans, Brassicas, corn, garlic, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, and mint. Add cut mint leaves as a mulch for beets. Avoid planting beets near pole beans.

