



## Supporting school gardening projects

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Developing Positive Minds & Healthy Bodies for a Brighter Future!



# KNOW YOUR VEG Discover beetroot

Here's the chance for you to discover some of the basic facts about Beetroot as well as some essential growing tips. Use these to decide whether you want to grow the vegetable, whether you are able to and what you need to do or look out for in order to grow a bountiful crop!



- Other names:** Beta Vulgaris
- Appearance:** Earthy flavoured blood red root with edible pretty green, purple-veined leaves.
- Popular varieties:** Late Flat Dutch; Early Jersey Wakefield; Danish Ballhead
- Interesting fact:** Leaves from the root that we eat were valued by the Romans at first for their medicinal qualities that treated both fevers and skin problems.
- Nutritional value:** Roots are a source of vitamin C and leaves contain vitamin A; carbohydrates; dietary fibre & protein
- When to grow:** Early spring to summer
- Grown from:** Seed either in trays at first or straight in the ground when it is warmer (+8 degrees C)
- Likes:** An open, sunny site; well-drained and fertile soil that has been improved with rotted organic matter; light soil that warms up quicker; watering in dry spells; regular weeding around the root
- Dislikes:** Lack of water or over-watering
- Harvest time:** 8-10 weeks from planting in early or mid autumn when roots are a tennis ball size
- Watch out for:** Too much water will cause splitting the root and not enough watering produces woody roots; harvest too late and the texture becomes woody
- Cooking tips:** Eaten raw, baked or steamed; serve in salads, soups and stew

# Essential Growing Tips for beetroot

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Beetroot

- Beetroot looks very pretty in a sunny spot because of their shiny green leaves that have brilliant red veins and stalks which radiate well in sunlight too.
- Everyone thinks of beetroot as being red. Other colours are available - yellow and white. Chiogga is a popular variety which has dark flesh with white rings.
- Roots can be round or long and straight. Most beetroot is round or globe shaped. Other shapes are possible. You can get varieties of beetroot which grow like ovals or cylinders. There are also long rooted varieties but these need a sandy, well drained soil in order to succeed.
- Beetroot likes moist, fertile soil to which manure has not been added.
- The 'seeds' are like a fruit and contain several seeds. Seeds will take about 10 to 14 days to germinate. For a very early crop sow some seeds under cloches in March. The beetroot will be ready for harvesting by May.
- Sow beetroot in small amounts at regular intervals. This will avoid having a harvest glut. Seeds can be sown straight into the ground about 1.5cm (0.5") deep.
- Seed can be grown in pots so that young plants are ready to plant out when other crops are dug up to create space. Keep about 15cm (6") between each plant.
- Bolt resistant varieties like Boltardy are best as these will not quickly run to seed. For the best taste, use the roots while they are small. When the roots get big and woody, they are not very nice. Twist off the leaves rather than cut them. This decreases the amount of 'bleeding' from the roots.

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