

BEET



While beets may never have really gone out of fashion, they certainly are back stronger than ever. The leaves are harvested as nutritious baby greens, and the roots are smaller and sweeter than older varieties. Colors range from golden yellow to striped, and pale pink to blood red. Their dark green leaves and bright red stems and veins look beautiful in the garden, flower beds or even in pots. Native to Europe, beets grow best in cool weather and will mature in about 75 days.

PLANTING

Beets prefer fertile, well-drained, deep, sandy soils that are rich in organic matter. Heavy, clay-based soils must be amended well with compost and organic matter to encourage and allow good root development. Before planting, incorporate 1-2 inches of Soil Building Compost or other composted organic matter, 1 lb. of Soil Activator, and 2-3 cups of "That's All It Takes" or Happy Frog Tomato & Vegetable (Oranganic) per 100 square feet and work this into the top 6 inches of soil.

Beets are best grown from seed and can be sown directly outside anytime after the soils reach 40 degrees. Optimal seed germination is at 55-75 degrees, so the best time to plant in Cache Valley is in April and May, and again in August and September for a fall crop. Plant seeds about 1/2 inch deep and cover with Coconut Coir (just a thin layer, 1/4-1/2 inch deep) to prevent soil crusting and to help retain moisture. Try to maintain uniform soil moisture for 7-10 days or until the seeds begin to emerge. As the seedlings begin to grow, thin the plants out to 2-4 inches apart in the rows, and 12-18 inches between rows.

VARIETIES

All the beet varieties we carry are excellent to grow in Cache Valley and in the Intermountain West, but we do have our favorites. Detroit Dark Red is our most popular variety for bottling or canning. Ruby Queen has excellent tops for baby greens and cans well also. Scarlet Supreme is our sweetest beet, and shares some of the best qualities for fresh eating and canning with Detroit and Ruby Queen. Cyindra makes great uniform sliced beets because of its cylindrical shape, and Burpee's Golden has a unique color and refined flavor. For a different twist, try Chioggia - it has red and white rings on the interior and a slight turnip flavor.

WATER

Beets need regular water and consistent soil moisture to produce well. Use of a soaker hose and light mulches can assist in maintaining correct soil moisture and guaranteeing a healthy harvest. We recommend about 1-2 inches of water applied per week in 2-3 applications. Moisture fluctuations can cause root cracking, slow leaf development, and poor yields. Maintaining consistent moisture will prevent premature flowering and assist in proper root development.



Burpee's Golden

FERTILIZER

About 6 weeks after germination, apply a balanced vegetable food (Ferti-lome Tomato & Vegetable Food or Happy Frog) to the side of the plants and water thoroughly. 1-2 cups per 10 feet of row works well. For more leafy greens, use a higher nitrogen fertilizer like 21-0-0. We recommend the Tomato & Vegetable Food because it contains many micro-nutrients (like Boron & Iron) that prevent common problems in developing beets.

NOTES

COMMON PROBLEMS

Beets don't compete well with weeds. Hand weed when necessary, and use pre-emergent weed controls (Treflan or Corn Gluten) after germination to prevent new weed emergence. Flea beetles and leaf miners commonly attack beets and leave distinctive damage behind that can alert the observant gardener to their presence. Several safe and effective chemical and organic controls are available to stop these pests before they start - Ferti-lome Spinosad Soap (Organic) or Hi-Yield Indoor/Outdoor Insecticide work quickly and safely to stop a wide variety of insects. The Spinosad Soap works best on leaf minors and is safe to use up to the day of harvest.

HARVESTING

Beet greens can be harvested as soon as the leaves are large enough to trim. Young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Heavy frost can damage leaves, so pick before hard frosts can damage in late October or November. Roots can be used as soon as the roots begin reach full size. Generally roots are mature in 60-80 days from seeding. If you let them grow longer, they tend to get more stringy and tough. Use a digging fork to loosen the soil and pull up the roots and trim the tops. Roots store best if cleaned and stored at 32-35 degrees with a high humidity. We have packed them in moist sand or peat to maintain the humidity in a cellar or cool basement for 2-4 months. Roots can also be left in the ground and mulched much like carrots for winter use.

BEET	
PLANTING TIME	Group B, E
PLANTING METHOD	Rows
PLANT SPACING	4-6"
ROW SPACING	2-3'
SEED DEPTH	1/4 - 1/2"
TIME TO HARVEST	15-30 days greens 45-60 days root
WATER NEEDS	1/2 - 1", 2x weekly, less near harvest
TRANSPLANT/ DIRECT SOW	Direct
SPECIAL ISSUES	Weeds Leaf Miners Flea Beetles Late-season inconsistent watering causes splits



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