

Beets

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Beets are a cool-season crop and grow well in the cool temperatures of spring and fall. They do poorly in hot weather. Beets are well-suited to large or small home gardens, since they require little room. They are grown for both the roots, which usually are pickled, and the young tops, which are used as greens.

Grow it

Varieties

- 'Detroit Dark Red,' 'Pacemaker II,' and 'Ruby Queen'

Soil Preparation

- Add a layer of compost to the soil or incorporate 1 cup of 15-5-10 fertilizer for every 10 feet of row. Spade the soil 8 to 10 inches deep and turn it over to mix in the compost or fertilizer.
- Make ridges 4 to 6 inches tall and 18 to 24 inches apart.

Planting

- In South Texas, beets can grow all winter. Further north, they should be planted as soon as the soil can be worked in spring.
- Make a furrow ½ inch deep down the center of the ridge.
- Space the seeds 1 to 2 inches apart in each row. Cover seeds lightly with loose soil and sprinkle with water.
- For a continuous supply of beets, make several plantings, 3 weeks apart.

Fertilizing

- When plants are 4 to 6 inches tall, apply 1 tablespoon of fertilizer for every 10 feet of row.



Watering

- Water the plants thoroughly each week if it does not rain.

Care During the Season

- Keep the beet plants free of weeds.
- When beets get crowded, thin plants to 2 to 3 inches apart.

Harvesting

- Beets should be ready to harvest 7 to 8 weeks after they are planted.
- Pull the plants by hand and cut off the root.

Insects and Diseases

- Common insect pests include flea beetles, webworms, aphids, and beet armyworms.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.



Sun:
Full



Soil:
Well-
drained



Planting:
Cool



Harvest:
Spring/Fall



Life Cycle:
Annual



Container
Friendly

Buy it

- Avoid beets with wilted leaves. Only choose beets with smooth, firm skins. Small beets will be more tender.

Store it

- Remove leaves, leaving about an inch of the stems. Use leaves as greens—raw or cooked. Store roots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Wash before cooking.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit nchfp.uga.edu.

Use it

Beet and Carrot Salad Roasted

Course: Side Dish

Serves: 8 1-cup servings

Ingredients:

Salad

- 3 cups fresh beets, thinly sliced (about 3 medium-sized beets)
- 3 cups fresh carrots, thinly sliced (about 3 large carrots)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 2 cups shallots, peeled and quartered
- ¼ cup unsalted raw pumpkin seeds, shelled (pepitas)
- 6 cups chopped kale, stems removed

Dressing

- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- ½ cup reduced-fat feta cheese

Optional*

- ¼ cup dried cranberries

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 425°F. Wash your hands, counter tops, and fresh produce thoroughly. Place beets and carrot slices on a baking dish. Pour 1 tablespoon of olive oil over beets and carrots, sprinkle them with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Mix well to combine. Place in oven and roast for 10 minutes.

Carefully remove baking dish from oven and top with quartered shallots and pumpkin seeds. Slowly blend vegetables and seeds together and return to the oven for 25 minutes.

In the meantime, place rinsed, chopped kale in a large salad bowl. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of olive oil over kale and massage oil into the leaves with your hands. Massage for 3 to 5 minutes until leaves are bright in color.

In a smaller bowl, combine the lemon juice, honey, and Dijon mustard. Set aside.

Remove vegetables from the oven and let cool for 5 to 10 minutes. Place vegetables on top of the kale and cover with feta cheese.

Drizzle the dressing. Toss well and let sit for 15 minutes to allow flavors to blend.

Recipe Notes:

Salad keeps well in the refrigerator for 1 to 2 days, without the feta cheese. If making for a next-day meal, top with feta just before serving.

Learn about it

- Beets are free of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- They are low in sodium and are an excellent source of folate.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

