

## Plant More Carrots Now for Fall and Winter



Carrots can still be planted through July for fall and winter harvest in most areas of the foothills. In higher elevation areas in July, plant only shorter season varieties with 50 to 60 days to maturity. Most seed packets list days-to-maturity information.

Carrots grow best in deep, well-drained sandy or peaty soils. Raised beds, worked to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, provide optimum drainage and allow for maximum root length and smoothness. Hard soil clods, uncomposted manure or fertilizer granules may cause carrots to fork, become hairy and crooked. A soil pH of 6.0 to 7.0 is optimal.

Sprinkle seed thinly in furrows 1/2 inch deep, with rows 12 inches apart. Cover lightly with soil. Keep moist until germination. Carrot seed is slow to germinate, often taking 12 to 14 days to sprout. If you want large carrots, thin carrot seedlings to two inches apart after the tops are three inches tall. For summer-planted carrots, try covering seed with finely sifted vermiculite or compost instead of soil to keep the seed damp until germination and to keep the soil from crusting over.

As summer-planted carrots grow and mature into the autumn, cover the roots with thick, loose mulch such as straw if the weather gets below 32 degrees. Mulching prevents the tops of the roots from turning green in the sun and keeps them from freezing during cold weather.

This article adapted from Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA. Please contact Ken Churches at [cdcalaveras@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cdcalaveras@ucdavis.edu) or (209) 754-6475 with your agricultural questions. To speak with a Certified Master Gardener: Calaveras (209) 754-2880, Tuolumne (209) 533-5696, Amador (209) 223-6837, El Dorado (530) 621-5543.