

Growing Guide: Beetroot



Top 5 Reasons to Grow Beetroot

1. Easy to grow
2. Stores well – can be eaten all year round
3. Zero food waste – you can eat every part of the beetroot (and all parts taste amazing!)
4. Nutritious – good source of iron and folate
5. Versatile veg – boil it, bake it, grate it into salads, make chutneys, wine and even cakes (beetroot brownies, yum)

Step 1: Sowing

When to Sow: Sow every two weeks from April until July (for a continuous supply of young beets) although you can start even earlier (March) in a greenhouse or polytunnel. Sow another batch in July which will be ready to lift in October for winter storage.

Where to Sow: You can sow beetroot seeds direct in the soil, but if you're growing outside we recommend sowing in a module tray first to transplant later. For baby beets you can sow in pots (one or two litre) and grow them on a sunny windowsill.

How to Sow: Fill the tray or pot with compost and give it a little bang on the table to settle the compost and get rid of any air pockets. Place one seed in each module in the tray, or 2-3 seeds in a large pot. Push each seed into the compost about 2cm deep and cover up with some compost. Give it a water.

Sowing Tip: Soak seeds in warm water for 20 mins before sowing to aid germination

Step 2: Growing

Transplanting: When the seedlings are large enough and ready to graduate to life outside the module tray (after about four weeks) it's time to move them on to either a larger container or into the soil outside. Plant about 10cm apart at 30cm between rows.

Growing Tips: Keep the ground weed free by hoeing carefully. Young beets are sensitive to cold spells so be mindful to put fleece over them if growing during the colder months. Over-watering encourages leaf growth at the expense of root formation.

Step 3 - Harvest

When to Harvest: Harvest the beets when they're nice and small (somewhere between the size of a golf ball and a tennis ball) and they will taste delicious. You can also harvest the leaves for salads, but not too many as the roots need the leaves too.

Harvesting Tip: You can store harvest beets in sand or peat and they will keep for 3-4 months. Twist off leaves a few centimetres above the root before storing. Handle carefully as they will "bleed" if damaged.

GIY Tips

Beetroot is an example of a veg that we succession sow. This means we sow a few seeds every so often so that fresh beetroot will be available all year round! We suggest sowing in February, March and July.

Beetroots do not like dry soil – it causes 'woody' roots (very unpleasant). Keep soil moist in dry weather and/or mulch to conserve moisture.