

How to grow: RADISH

"Simple and easy to grow and ready to eat from as little as 4 weeks from germination. Radishes add fantastic texture to salads and recipes & can be grown throughout the year in almost any growing environment"

Essential Kit:

- High Phosphorus Fertiliser
- Bone Meal Fertiliser
- Thermoformed Pots 7cm
- Full Size Seed Tray
- Bathgate Premium Compost



GETTING READY

Radish are one of those vegetable crops that gardeners sow and harvest early in the year. Although they can be grown pretty much all year round, the season can be crucial to how their flavour develops. The radish, part of the brassica family, can have a taste ranging from quite mild to a fiery heat. A simple guide to follow is that radish grown in cooler temperatures during spring and autumn tend to be milder. Growing them from late spring through to late summer, when temperatures are higher, gives a much hotter flavour.

PREPARING TO SOW

Fill your cell tray with compost that has acclimatised to indoor temperatures by being stored in the greenhouse for a couple of days. Firm the compost down in each of the cells before topping up with more compost and then make a final indentation to sow the seeds into. A 24 cell pack that fits into a full size seed tray is an ideal size. You should always make sure the growing bed is also adequately prepared. An organic bone meal fertiliser is a great choice as it has a small amount of nitrogen to give healthy leaves but is rich in phosphorus, essential for root crops.

HOW MANY SEEDS?

Radish seed are a good size to sow using your fingers. You can sow 4 or 5 seeds into each cell, which means you could end up with a crop of 100 plus radishes from just one tray. It doesn't matter too much if a few extra fall in as radish sown in this way are quite forgiving. Once the seed are in cover them with a layer of compost and water before labelling and setting aside in the greenhouse, or a sunny windowsill, to germinate.

GERMINATION

Radish will germinate quite quickly within 4-10 days at temperatures between 18°C - 24°C. However radish seed will also germinate at temperatures as low as 5°C making then a great early season 'in and out' crop. With so many seeds able to grow in one seed tray, it makes them a low space space-high yield crops to grow when space in the greenhouse or cold frame is at a premium.

WHERE TO PLANT

Once the seedlings have reached about 4cm it is time to plant them out. They prefer a sunny position but will grow quite happily in partial shade. Keep in mind that during the summer when there is more chance of sustained periods of heat they grow

better in full shade.

Due to the size and speed which radishes grow at they make an ideal companion crop to be planted in between other slower growing vegetables such as carrots or parsnips. Filling these gaps increased your overall crops yield per square meter.

PLANTING OUT

If you are planting out the cell grown seedlings then make a hole using a dibber ready to pop the plug straight into. When planting early in the season then make the hole deeper than the depth of the plug by 1cm. This helps get the roots that little bit deeper into the soil where the increased soil temperature will benefit the early growth. When planting out the plugs containing several radish space them around 15cm away from each other in both directions.

Sow seed directly into drills about 1cm deep and leave 1cm space between each seed. Carefully fill in each drill with compost before watering. Once the seeds have germinated thin the rows to a spacing of 2.5cm between each seedling. Remember to keep the seedlings you have thinned out and use them in a salad as they will have a mild radish taste and add a little colour to your plate. Cover your plug plants or drill sown seeds with frost fleece to help keep the soil temperature up as well as pests out. As we have already mentioned radish will reach maturity very quickly, but leave them in the ground too long and they will become woody and have a more intense flavour.

Filling those gaps in the beds between crops very few weeks with a fresh sowing means that you don't have to worry about having too many to eat at any one time. When it is time to pick them always choose the largest roots first.

PESTS & OTHER PROBLEMS

Slugs and snails can devastate radish crops in a short period. Growing them in pots can reduce the risk of attack. Alternatively, you may want to consider a ferric phosphate based slug pellet. Use sparingly and ensure they are approved by organic growers and farmers. Flea beetle is a problem from spring to early summer for members of the brassica family. They are easy to spot as they will chew unsightly holes in the leaves. Fine insect mesh can help eradicate or reduce the problem, as can a healthy garden ecosystem. Wildlife such as birds, frogs and ground beetles all enjoy eating the flea beetle larvae. Radishes that crack are usually a sign of irregular

watering. This is caused by the roots swelling after quickly taking in large amounts of water. Whilst not as pretty as a perfect radish they are still just as edible.

As I have already mentioned radishes that grow too slowly or have been left in the ground too long can become very spicy or woody in texture. This is avoidable with regular succession planting, and avoiding planting over the very hot summer period. Small bulbs are usually a result of radishes grown in hot weather. Failing to thin them sufficiently will restrict how much the root can swell. At the same time, you will often see the plant bolt and try to set seed.

TYPES OF RADISH

There are countless varieties of radish to try but here are some of the most popular ones: Radish 'Tarzan F1': a classic round, red root that germinate well and produce high yields that keep well. Radish 'French Breakfast 3': an elongated red radish with a white tip. An early maturing root with a pleasant crispy taste and an ideal choice for window boxes. Radish 'Diakon Mooli I Jarola F1': a great choice for early spring and summer as it is bolt resistant. The roots will grow to 25-30cm in length so make sure the bed is well prepared. As they are a larger root leave 10cm between each plant.

Need to know:



SOW:

Spring: March to August / Winter: July to August



PLANT:

April to October



HARVEST:

4-6 weeks from germination



SPACING:

Summer cultivars: 2.5cm apart / Winter cultivars: 15cm apart



LOCATION:

Plant in full sun or partial shade