

Home Gardening Series

Radishes

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Vegetables

Environment

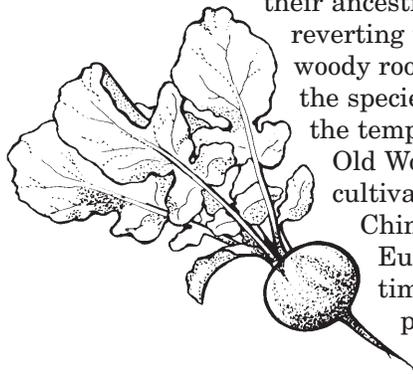
Light – sunny
Soil – well-drained loam
Fertility – rich
pH – 5.8 to 7.2
Temperature – cool
Moisture – moist

Culture

Planting – direct seed late winter to late summer
Spacing – 2-4 inches x 12-15 inches
Hardiness – cool season, hardy
Fertilizer – medium

Radishes – *Raphanus sativus*

Radishes have been cultivated for over 2,000 years but are still close to their ancestral type, often reverting to a form with a dry, woody root. There is no doubt the species is indigenous in the temperate regions of the Old World. It has been cultivated in gardens from China and Japan to Europe since earliest times. It is difficult to pinpoint its specific place of origin.



Radishes are grown all over the world today and are highly esteemed because of their pungent flavor.

Radishes, a member of the crucifer family, are cool-season, fast-maturing, easy-to-grow vegetables. Garden radishes can be grown wherever there is sun, even on the smallest city lot. They usually grow

best in the spring, but some late-maturing varieties can be planted for summer use. Winter radishes are slower to develop than spring radishes, but they grow considerably larger, remain crisp longer and are usually more pungent.

Cultural Practices

Planting Time

Plant spring radishes from late winter to mid-spring. Make successive plantings of short rows every 10 to 14 days. Spring radishes can also be planted in late winter in a protected cold frame, window box or container in the house or on the patio. Late-maturing varieties (Icicle, All Season) usually withstand heat better than the early maturing varieties and are recommended for late spring planting for summer harvest. Winter radishes require a much longer time to mature than spring radishes and are planted at the same time as late turnips.

Spacing and Depth of Planting

Sow seed 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep. Thin spring varieties to 1/2 to 1 inch between plants. Thin winter radishes to 2 to 4 inches or even farther apart to allow for proper root development.

Care

Radishes grow well in almost any soil that is well prepared, fertilized before planting and that has adequate moisture. Slow development makes radishes hot in taste and woody in texture.

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Cultivars

Crop	Variety	Days to Maturity	Seed/ 100 Ft of Row	Disease Resistance or Tolerance	Sources (see "Sources" paragraph below)	Remarks
Radish						
Spring Radishes	Sparkler	25	1 oz		6, 25, 27, 29, 32, 36	Almost round, bright red with pronounced white tips.
	Early Scarlet Globe	24	1 oz		2, 6, 23, 32, 36	Round, bright red.
	Cabernet	23	1 oz	CR, RZ	16, 32	Smooth, dark red radishes are crisp and slow to become pithy. Mild taste.
Summer Radishes	White Icicle	30	1 oz		2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 16, 23, 25, 31, 32, 35, 36	Long, slender, white.
	Champion	28	1 oz		2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 25, 32, 36	Round, red radish with firm flesh, slim taproot and tall tops. Great for extra early or late plantings.

Abbreviations: **CR**: Club Root; **RZ**: Rhizoctonia; **(R)**: Resistant; **(T)**: Tolerant

Harvesting

Pull radishes when they are of usable size (usually 1 to 1 1/2 inches) and relatively young. Radishes remain edible for only a short time before they become pithy (spongy) and hot.

Common Problems

Root maggots may tunnel into radishes. Apply a suggested soil insecticide before the next planting.

Sources

For a list of sources referred to by number, request FSA6106, *Seed Sources: Vegetable and Herb*, for current address, telephone and web site.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why do my radishes grow all tops with no root development?

- A. There may be several reasons: seed planted too thick and plants not thinned, weather too hot for the spring varieties that do best in cool temperatures and too much shade. Radishes will not enlarge properly when forced to mature during temperatures above 80 degrees F.

Q. What causes my radishes to crack and split?

- A. The radishes are too old. Pull them when they are young and small.

Q. What are winter radishes and how do they differ from regular garden radishes?

- A. Winter radish varieties produce large roots which may be round or elongated and white, red or black. Chinese Rose and Round Black Spanish are two winter cultivars. They require a long season for full growth. The roots may be eaten raw with vinegar or cooked like turnips. The flavor of winter radishes is usually pungent and the texture more fibrous and less crisp than common garden radishes.

Q. Sometimes my radishes have a hot, bitter flavor. What is the problem?

- A. Off-flavored radishes are caused by planting at the wrong time or poor cultural practices, such as low fertility or low moisture, resulting in slow growth. For highest quality, radishes should grow fast. Maintain adequate fertility and good soil moisture conditions to encourage fast growth. Radishes that are too old taste hot.

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