



# Root Vegetables



## Varieties Grown in New York State

- Beets
- Carrots
- Parsnips
- Rutabagas
- Turnips

## Nutrition and Health Benefits

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

**FUN FACT!** Red beets are used as a natural red food coloring, and a type of sugar is produced from the sugar beet!

- Carrots are fat free, sat fat free, low in sodium, cholesterol free, and an excellent source of vitamin A.
- Parsnips are fat free, cholesterol free, very in low sodium, and a good source of vitamin C, folate, and fiber.

**FUN FACT!** Parsnips are sometime used to sweeten a dish, because of their nutty, sweet taste!

- Rutabagas are fat free, cholesterol free, very in low sodium, and an excellent source of vitamin C.
- Turnips are fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium, and an excellent source of vitamin C.

## How to Grow It

- **BEETS:** Grow in full sun or partial shade. Plant in early spring, and unlike most root crops, beets can be started inside and then transplanted outside.

**FUN FACT!** Beets come in a variety of colors, like golden yellow, deep purple, and red and white striped! Those are nicknamed candy cane beets!

- **CARROTS:** Need full sun and well-draining soil. They can also tolerate a light frost! Plant carrots in early spring, along with radishes.

**FUN FACT!** Carrots aren't only orange! You can find purple, white, yellow, and red carrots!

- **PARSNIPS:** Hardest of all garden crops! Grow in full sun or part shade, they also tolerate frost. They're the sweetest after enduring frosts and cold weather! Harvest in winter and early spring!

- **RUTABAGAS:** Easy to grow, in full sun or part shade. They also tolerate frost, which improves quality and flavor!

- **TURNIPS:** Fast growing, harvest turnips in the fall. Quality and flavor are improved by a light frost. Turnips need full sun part shade, are easy to grow, and should be planted early spring to late summer.

**FUN FACT!** Turnips come in all shapes, sizes, and colors, from round to cylindrical, rose to black colored!

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## Selection

- Choose beets with firm, smooth skins and non-wilted leaves. Smaller beets are more tender!
- Choose well-shaped carrots that are smooth and crisp. Look for a deep color, and fresh, green tops. Avoid soft, wilted, or split carrots.
- Choose parsnips that are firm and dry without pits. Smaller ones are more flavorful and tender!
- Choose rutabagas that are heavy for their size and free of soft spots or cracks.
- Choose pearly, heavy turnips with no soft spots and fresh leaves. Small to medium ones are the sweetest!

## Storage Tips

- **TO STORE BEETS:** Remove any leaves (these greens can be eaten raw or cooked!) and leave about 1 inch of the stem. Store them in a plastic bag in the fridge for up to 3 weeks, and wash before cooking.
- **TO STORE CARROTS:** Refrigerate them in a plastic bag with tops removed for up to 2 weeks. To keep them even longer wrap in a paper towel!
- **TO STORE PARSNIPS:** Store unwashed in the fridge, in an unsealed bag, for 3 weeks or more.
- **TO STORE RUTABAGAS:** Refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 3 weeks.
- **TO STORE TURNIPS:** Store in the fridge in a plastic bag for only a few days, since they get bitter with prolonged storage!

## Preparation & Cooking Tips

- Eat it raw: Beets, carrots, rutabagas, turnips
- Eat it cooked (steam, bake, boil, roast, microwave): Beets, carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips
- Add 'em to soups!: Carrots, Parsnips

**FUN FACT!** Thinly sliced beets are great for pickling!

**FUN FACT!** Substitute parsnips for carrots in almost any recipe!

**FUN FACT!** Rutabagas are often waxed to prevent dehydration, and are sweeter than turnips. They also turn orange when cooked!

## Kid-Friendly Eating Tips

- Grated raw beets are an excellent addition to a salad! Beet greens can be treated like spinach or chard: sauté or use for a salad, too!
- Purée rutabaga on its own, with a bit of parmesan or add it to mashed potatoes and/or carrots.
- Rutabagas are a great addition to soups or stews and make a great soufflé.
- Cube and roast beets and rutabagas, with olive oil and your choice of herbs or with a honey or maple syrup glaze.
- Add shredded carrots to any salad.
- Bake with carrots—they can be used as a main ingredient in cakes, muffins, and cookies!
- Slice and roast carrots with beets, potatoes, and parsnips and serve as root veggie fries!
- Cut raw parsnips into strips (like carrots) and eat with dip.
- Purée or mash up parsnips like you would potatoes; this would also be a great base to a soup.



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