

Hall Street Allotment Association



Keyfacts on Growing Beetroot:

Beetroot are easy to grow. The globe-shaped beetroot are the most common but there are also cylindrical varieties which are often grown for show and have the benefit of evenly sized slices. Most beetroot are suitable for close spacing and container growing.

Most varieties are red/purple in colour but they also come in a variety of colours from deepest purple/blue through to cream and white.

Sow outdoors in situ from March to July for harvest during June to November. The seed, which is really a fruit containing a cluster of seeds, some varieties have a single seed. Seeds will last for 3-5 years and will take about 10 -14 days to germinate.

Beetroot varieties come in globe, cylindrical (half- long or stump- rooted) and long shapes. The popularity of long beetroots has declined in recent years but they can often be seen at horticultural shows.

Varieties of Beetroot:

- **Bolthardy** is a globe variety which is resistant to bolting and is good for early sowing. It is smooth skinned and has a deep red colour. Awarded the RHS Award Of Garden Merit (AGM).
- **Kestrel F1** has a good resistance to bolting. It produces smooth, round , sweet, dark red globes beetroots is suitable for close growing. It is delicious cooked or eaten raw, or used as 'baby beets' as well as when mature. Awarded the RHS Award Of Garden Merit (AGM).
- **Cjiogga** is a sweet globe beetroot with 'bullseye' red and white rings inside, these fade to soft pink after cooking.

- **Solist** and **Moneta** are monogerm globe varieties (single seed) so less thinning needed. They have a sweet flavour.
- **Cylindra** is the most popular cylindrical variety. With deep red flesh and good keeping qualities.

Pests and Problems with Beetroot:

Beetroot is an easy, trouble-free crop. Bolting is not much of a problem with the modern, bolt-resistant varieties. Pest and diseases are few although may be more of problem in sugar beet growing areas. Mineral deficiency of boron, magnesium and manganese may occur.

Sowing and Growing Beetroot:

You can sow beetroot seeds by either:

- Sowing seeds directly into their final growing position 2-3 cm (1 inch) deep, and at a spacing of 10 cm (4 inches), in rows 30 cm (12 inches) between rows. Thin carefully to one plant per station when the seedlings are large enough to handle. (Do not replant these removed seedlings).
- Or sow the seeds into plastic modules using a suitable seed compost, keep in greenhouse or a suitable cold frame thin out to one seedling per module (Do not replant removed seedling). When the seedlings are of a suitable size, transplant to their final growing position. The benefit of this method is that the plant is established and thinning out is reduced and the likelihood of damaging the plant when hoeing is greatly reduced.

Keep weed-free but be careful not to damage the roots while hoeing. Give sufficient water to prevent dryness during dry weather as lack of water will cause poor yields of woody, cracked beetroot. Mulching can help to conserve water.

Soil Facts:

Pick a sunny spot and dig in autumn or early winter, add well rotted compost if the humus content is low. Apply lime if the soil is known to be acid. In spring prepare the seed bed - rake in Growmore fertiliser 2-3 weeks before sowing.

Beetroot benefit from a nitrogen feed (unlike other root crops). Use some pelleted chicken manure or other high nitrogen fertiliser at the recommended rate.

Harvesting & Storing Beetroot:

Remove alternate plants when golf ball sized and use as baby beets, leaving the rest to mature. Beetroots sown in June can be left in the ground to mature fully. They can be lifted in October and stored in the same way as carrots or parsnips. It is also convenient to boil, peel and freeze beetroot ready for use. Beetroot can also be pickled.