

How to grow radishes

Radish

Family: Brassicaceae (Mustard)

Season: Cool

Ease of growing: Easy

Nutrient needs: Low

Water needs: High

Common propagation: Seed

Seed facts

Germination temperatures: 45°F to 95°F

Germination time: 3 to 10 days

Viability: 5 years

Direct sow: Any time during season

Planning facts

Spacing: 3/4" (small) to 4" (Daikon)

Plants per square foot: 9 to 36

Succession sow: every 2 to 3 weeks

Time to harvest: 20 to 60 days

Variety selection

Radishes are classified by their planting time – early, mid or late; by root shape – oblong, flat, round, half-long and long; and by color. Aside from your standard red, round radish, try “Easter Egg” radishes for their multiple colors. “D’Avignon” is an excellent cylindrical 3-inch radish with tender and mild flavor. “Daikon” radishes are long, white radishes from Japan that can reach 16 inches or more while holding their texture and flavor. Daikon is a type of oilseed

radish that is becoming increasingly popular as a cover crop, planted after early harvested vegetables. The long roots of oilseed radish act as a “bio-drill,” penetrating compacted soils and creating a nice place for early planted vegetables the following spring.

Preparation and planting

Like most root crops, radishes prefer loose-textured soil. Heavy clay soils tend to produce misshapen roots.

Care

Radishes require little care after planting, but they must have sufficient and consistent water for best quality.

Major pests

Insects: Flea beetle and cabbage maggot.

Diseases: Downy mildew, black root, scab.

Harvesting and storage

When radishes are ready to harvest, the top of their pink, swollen stem will often emerge from the soil. Harvest whenever they reach the size you desire. Smaller radishes are more tender and have a stronger flavor. If you wait too long, radishes begin to get pithy. Daikon radishes take longer to mature and can snap off easily during harvest, so it’s a good idea to use a fork to loosen the soil before pulling. When stored at 32°F and high humidity, radishes will keep four weeks or more.

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