



Beets

Growing and Harvest Information

Beets are a fast-growing, cool-weather crop. Wait to sow seeds until soil is 50 degrees F. In full sun, sow seeds 1/2 inch deep and 1-2 inches apart. When plants are 2 inches tall, thin plants to 3-4 inches apart. Mulch and water well.

Harvest beets 50-70 days after planting. Harvest up to 1/3 of the beet's leaves without harming the root. Beet roots are best when they are 1 1/2-3 inches in diameter. If left in the ground for more than 10 days after reaching their full size, they will start deteriorating. To harvest, gently pull the roots from the soil by hand, to avoid bruising them. Twist (NOT cut) off the top, leaving about 1 inch of stem, to prevent the root from bleeding.

Introduction

History and folklore both associate beets with love. According to one myth, falling in love is the result of eating beets from the same root. Ancient Romans considered beets an aphrodisiac. In Greek mythology, Aphrodite, the goddess of love, ate beets to enhance her appeal. Today, we know beets are a source of tryptophan and betaine, both substances that promote feelings of well-being. They also contain high amounts of boron, a trace mineral that increases the level of sex hormones in the human body.

Preservation

Storage:

- Trim the leaves and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Do not trim the tail.
- Place the bulbs in a plastic bag and store in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator for 7-10 days.

Drying:

- Discard anything wilted, bruised, moldy, or deteriorated.
- Wash carefully and thoroughly.
- Cook as usual (then there's no need to blanch). Cool. Peel. Slice them by how they'll be used in recipes (e.g., chips, shoestring strips 1/8" thick).
- Spread pieces one layer thick on racks and dry. Dehydrator: 2-3 hours. Sun: 8-10 hours. When vegetables are dry enough, they're usually brittle or tough.
- Fill and seal moisture-proof container (glass jars, tin cans with tight-fitting lids, plastic containers) as full as possible without crushing. Store in cool, dark, dry place.

Nutritional Benefits

Source	Rating
Vitamins	GOOD
Minerals	GOOD
Fiber	GOOD

Use By Guide

Vegetable State	Use by
Raw	6 months
Dried	1 year
Home-Canned	1 year



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Fun Fact:

Beets are an excellent source of folate, necessary for DNA formation.

Try Beets In:

Dips
Rice
Salads
Sandwiches
Slaws
Soups
Skillet-Fries

Prepare Beets Like This:

Baked
Boiled
Braised
Grilled
Pickled
Pureed
Roasted
Steamed

Preparation

Recipe 1: Lemon and Butter Braised Beet Greens

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 2 lbs baby beet leaves, 4"-6" in length, washed
- 1-2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

Directions

- Heat the oil and butter in a large skillet or Dutch oven over low heat, and add the garlic.
- Cook gently, stirring frequently, until the garlic is fragrant but does not take on any color.
- Add the moist greens, raise the heat to medium-high, and cover the pan. Cook until the greens wilt, about 2 minutes, shaking the pan once or twice.
- Remove the cover; if there's any excess liquid, cook until it evaporates.
- Toss the greens with the lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Serve hot.

Recipe 2: Thyme Roasted Beets

Ingredients:

- 2 medium golden or red beets, washed and trimmed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions

- Heat oven to 400 F. Wrap beets in aluminum foil. Bake 40 minutes or until tender. Set aside to cool slightly. Peel and cut beets into medium-sized chunks. In medium bowl, combine cooked beets, oil, thyme, salt, and pepper. Place on baking sheet. Roast in oven for additional 5-10 minutes until hot.
- (OR) Peel and cut raw beets. Toss with oil and seasonings. Roast for about 25 minutes.