

# How to Grow Your Own Beetroot

Beetroot is mainly used to add colour and flavour to salads. It can seem a slow-starting crop, but it will grow faster once the seedlings emerge so don't panic! It's best to pull up the plant before the beetroot grows too large or it may have a woody texture. To ensure a continuous supply and avoid a glut, sow little and often every two to three weeks throughout the summer.



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Sow		●	●	●	●							
Harvest							●	●	●	●		

## How to look after me

**Soil:** Any type, light, high-nitrogen

**Position:** Sunny and open

**Location:** Outdoors, container

## Sowing

- Prepare the soil well – [read my guide here](#)
- Sow the seeds 1-2cm deep in rows 7cm apart
- Sow in spring when soil has warmed to about 7C
- Beetroot seeds can be slow to germinate so soak them in warm water for four hours before sowing
- Some types of beetroot 'bolt' if sown too early or if the weather is very cold. If you're sowing early in the season, choose a bolt-resistant variety



## David's Top Tip

You can grow enough beetroot to store it over winter. Sow a new crop in late summer, at least 10 weeks before first heavy frost is expected, and lift them out before it strikes



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## Growing

- Beetroot seeds are actually made up of a cluster of 2 or 3 seeds, so thin out the weakest seedlings as soon as possible
- Thin to 10cm apart if growing maincrop beetroot, 2.5cm apart if growing to pickle
- Beetroot are sensitive to changes in water levels – dryness will cause woodiness and low yields; a sudden return to water will cause splitting
- Keep conditions stable by watering moderately every two weeks. You can also apply a mulch to help retain moisture



## Harvesting

- When the roots reach golf ball size, pull up alternate plants. Use the thinned crop as normal and leave the rest to mature to a larger size
- Beetroot are ready to harvest 7-13 weeks after sowing. Do not leave them to reach cricket ball size or they will be woody
- Twist off the leaves rather than cutting, which causes the vegetables to 'bleed'. Leave a 5cm crown of stalks above the beetroot
- In mild areas beetroot can be left in the ground over winter if the soil is well drained, but cover them with a layer of straw
- If you're not leaving them in the ground, lift before severe frost and store in moist sand in a frost-free place
- Harvested beetroot will normally keep until mid-spring

*Did You Know?*  
The young green leaves of beetroot tops can be used in salads or eaten as green veg