

# CARROT

**Spanish:** zanahoria **Russian:** morkov' (морковь) **Vietnamese:** cà rốt

Carrots originated from central Asia, near what is now Afghanistan. Carrots have not always been favored in their orange variety; originally they were favored in their purplish hue, ranging from lavender to almost black. Orange carrots didn't dominate the market until the 1700's. Carrots come in many shapes and sizes: as long roots, like round golf balls, and small finger-like carrots to name a few. They prefer cool, moist spring-like weather to germinate, but can tolerate warmer temperatures with moist soil. In Oregon, you can find locally grown carrots for most of the year.



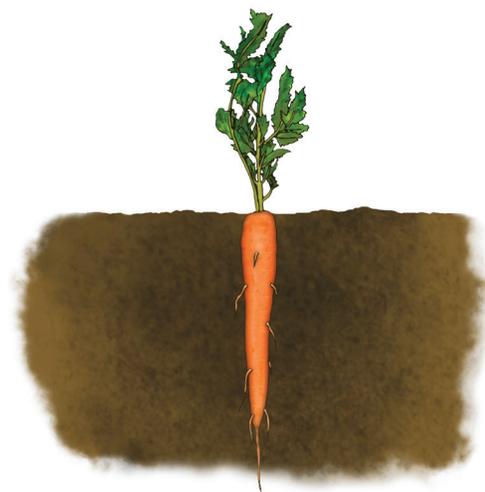
## FIND OUT MORE:

<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/carrot-w.html>

<http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download.asp#carrot>

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/carrot.pdf>

## FROM SEED TO PLATE



Carrots are a biennial vegetable, though gardeners most commonly cultivate them as an annual. Carrots are planted by seed in the cooler months. If left to flower in its second year, *daucus carota*, the genus name of carrots, will grow a plant that resembles an umbrella. This characteristic is shared with other Umbelliferae species, such as wild carrot, parsley, fennel, and parsnip.

## FIND OUT MORE:

<http://botanydictionary.org/umbelliferae.html>

<http://www.carrotmuseum.co.uk/seeds.html>

## DID YOU KNOW?

Carrots can be stored in the ground over the winter if frost isn't a concern! You can pull them out when you are ready to eat them!

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/carrot.pdf>

## IN THE GARDEN

Carrots are fun to grow in school gardens! Students enjoy pulling the tender greens out of the soil to find a bright orange carrot.



**SUN:** Carrots can tolerate shade and sun as long as the soil temperature stays warm and the soil dries out after a rain.



**WATER:** Even moisture content is important. Depending on the soil type, increase water for sandy, well draining soils; decrease for heavy clay soils.



**SOIL:** To grow carrots, make sure your soil is loose to prevent misshapen carrots as they root down. You can increase aeration by adding nutrient rich compost and organic matter.



**SEEDS:** Seeds germinate best in the spring under cool, moist conditions.



**PLANT:** Carrots can be planted in early March through late July. Sprinkle no more than 3 small carrot seeds per inch in a burrow ½ inch deep. Carefully cover with soil.



**SPACE:** Plant carrots about 3 inches apart.



**CARE:** Once seeds have germinated, thin small plants so that each root is 1-2 inches apart.



**HARVEST:** Carrots are ready for harvest around 90 days from planting, but can be pulled when they are a preferred size and tenderness. They can be kept in the ground during cool months if frost isn't a threat. **Note:** if left in the ground for extended periods during warmer months, carrots can become woody and over mature.

### FIND OUT MORE:

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/carrot.pdf>

<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/carrot-w.html>

## STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Choose carrots that are firm and do not look overly dried out
- Avoid carrots that feel soft or limp, or have wilted greens
- Store carrots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, remove carrot greens before storing
- If carrots become limp, place them in water in the fridge for 1-2 hours to gain firmness
- If kept cool and dry, carrots can keep 4-6 months.

### FIND OUT MORE:

<http://vric.ucdavis.edu/pdf/carrot.pdf>

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/carrot.cfm>

## IN THE KITCHEN

Carrots can be eaten raw, roasted in the oven, sautéed, steamed, or boiled. Carrots add color and crunch to whatever you eat with them. They are versatile and easy to prepare. Before using, rinse carrots well. Some people like to peel carrots, but we recommend leaving the skin on. Cut length wise for carrot spears that are great for snacks, wraps and stir-fries; grate to add to coleslaw, salads and sandwiches; cut diagonally to add to soups and stews; cut in half moons for stir-fries; boil and mix with butter, salt and pepper; add to any mashed roots for extra color and sweetness; combine juice with a splash of orange juice and lime for a refreshing and sweet beverage – any way you slice it, carrots are great!

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

### TANGY CARROT SALAD\*

Serves 4-6

*Recipe from Head Start Family Worker*

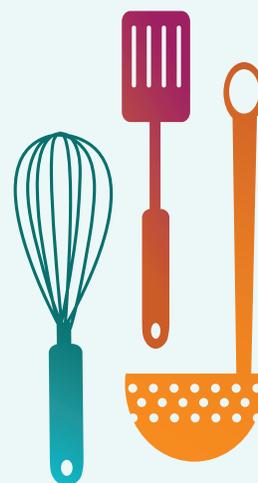
#### INGREDIENTS

1.5 lbs. carrots  
½ cup plain yogurt  
¼ cup sour cream  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
1 large cloves of garlic, minced  
1 Tbs. – chopped fresh dill (or ½ Tbs. dried dill)  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Wash, peel and finely shred carrots, put in a bowl
2. Add yogurt, sour cream mayonnaise and minced garlic – lightly fold together until carrots are coated.
3. Add chopped dill, salt and pepper. Fold together.
4. Chill and serve.

\* If preparing the night before serving, mix in dill, salt and pepper before serving.



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for carrots can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



### GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about \_\_\_\_” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about carrots!” sticker for the carrot month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe at the month at a parent meeting, or when parents pick up their children from your site.

### CARROT VARIETIES



Orange • Purple • Red • White • Yellow



### ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.