

How to Grow Radishes

General

Time your radish plantings a week apart for a longer harvest period. The secret to growing a great radish is to plant when the weather is cool, to not plant too close together and to harvest promptly before the roots get woody and bitter.

Latin

Raphanus sativus

Family: Brassicaceae

Difficulty

Easy

Season & Zone

Season: Cool season

Exposure: Full sun

Zone: All

Timing

Radishes can be grown all season but they're easiest when sown March/April and again August through October. Optimal soil temperature: 18-24°C (65-75°F). Seeds should sprout in 5-7 days.

Starting

Sow seeds 5mm (¼") deep, 25 seeds per 30cm (12") in rows spaced 30-45cm (12-18") apart, and thin to 6-12 plants per 30cm (12").

Growing

Ideal pH: 6.0-6.8. Radishes are moderate to heavy feeders. Best in rich, loamy soil amended with composted manure. Add 1 cup of complete organic fertilizer for every 3m (10') of row for background fertility. Lime beds the previous fall. The real secret to growing this little vegetable is speed. Sow a short row frequently, thin them quickly, keep them watered, eat them quickly, and sow some more.

Harvest

Harvest promptly when radishes are the size of large marbles. Leaves and developing seedpods are also tasty.

Diseases & Pests

Root maggots and flea beetles can be a problem. Expect to lose 20-30% of your crop to maggots if you don't use a floating row cover.

Companion Planting

Plant radishes near beans, beets, celeriac, chervil, cucumber, lettuce, mint, parsnip, peas, spinach, squash, and tomatoes. Avoid planting near potatoes. It is said that planting 3 or 4 icicle radishes around the mound where you plant squash, and allowing them to grow and bloom, will prevent most pests of squash and cucumber.

