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PLANTING DIRECTIONS Radish CHERRY BELLE, Beet RUBY QUEEN, Carrot CHANTENAY RED CORED, Spinach BLOOMSDALE, Swiss Chard RAINBOW MIX, Kale RED RUSSIAN, Lettuce LEAF BLEND



CHERRY BELLE RADISH

Sowing: Direct sow the first crop of Cherry Belle red radish seeds in rich soil, about four weeks before the last expected spring frost. Plant them in deeply worked up soil about 1/2" deep and 1" apart; later, thin the seedlings 2-3" apart or more for larger radishes. For a continuous harvest, plant a new crop every two weeks. Since most radishes do not tolerate heat well, it is best to avoid planting them in the heat of midsummer. For a fall crop and winter storage, plant red radish seeds about two months before the first expected fall frost.

Growing: Radishes do well with consistently moist soil and the addition of organic matter such as compost. Do not allow the soil to dry out, but also avoid overwatering as this can cause splitting.

Harvesting: This variety tastes best when harvested at 1" in diameter. Cherry Belle radishes are very sweet and crisp, do not grow woody, and store well in the refrigerator.

RUBY QUEEN BEET

Sowing: Direct sow seeds outside 4 weeks before the last expected frost. Soften the Ruby Queen beet seeds by soaking them in water for 2 hours, then plant in full sun and well-drained soil. Sow them 1" deep and 1" apart in rows 1-2' apart. Tamp down the earth above the seeds to ensure good contact with the soil, and germination should take place in 5-15 days. Add compost or other organic matter for healthy growth. For companion planting benefits, plant Ruby Queen beet seeds with bush beans, onions, or members of the cabbage family; avoid planting them near pole beans.

Growing: Since each beet "seed" holds up to 8 actual seeds, the seedlings will need to be thinned to 3" apart. The uprooted plants do well as a second crop, as transplanting them will set them about 2 weeks behind the original plants. Take care not to bruise the seedlings when weeding. They love cool weather, and can survive temperatures down to 25F.

Harvesting: Beets can be harvested any time after they reach a size of 1" in diameter, usually after about two months of growth. For best taste and tenderness, do not allow beets to grow over 3" in diameter. After pulling them, twist off the tops about 1" up the stem to prevent the beets from bleeding. Up to one third of the tasty beet greens can also be harvested without damaging the plant. Golden Detroit beets keep well for later use.

CARROT CHANTENAY RED-CORED

Sowing: Prepare the soil 3 weeks before the last expected spring frost or when the soil temperature reaches 45 degrees F. These short, stocky carrots can grow even in heavy soil. Build up a raised mound in the row, about 8" wide; sow the seeds on it, and cover them with 1/4" very loose soil. Keep the soil moist, but do not allow the the area above the seeds to become hard - this may prevent the seeds from germinating. Sow more seeds every 3-6 weeks for a continuous crop. For companion planting benefits, plant carrots with aromatic herbs or onions; this will repel the carrot fly and its maggots.

Growing: When the seedlings reach 2" high, gently thin them to 2-4" apart, depending on desired carrot size. The farther apart they are, the bigger they will grow. Do not allow the soil to dry out. When the tops of the carrots begin to emerge from the soil, cover them with mulch to keep them tender. Keep weeds under control to prevent the young carrots from being stunted.

Harvesting: Begin gathering baby carrots when grow big enough to eat, to allow the remaining carrots to reach a larger size. If they become difficult to pull, make sure the ground is moist. To store carrots for the winter, twist off the tops but do not wash them. Layer them in damp sand or sawdust. In warmer climates, leave the carrots in the garden over winter topped with a thick layer of mulch.

BLOOMSDALE SPINACH

Sowing: Because Bloomsdale Longstanding spinach loves cool weather and can survive sub-zero temperatures when protected sufficiently, Bloomsdale spinach seeds should be planted as soon as the ground can be worked in spring, or after the heat of summer for a fall crop. Gardeners in regions with warmer winters will be able to grow spinach all winter long. Sow the seeds in deeply worked soil 1/2" deep and 2" apart in rows 12-18" apart, later thinning the seedlings to 4-8" apart. For a continuous crop, plant more seed every 10 days until the summer heat begins; spinach seeds go dormant above temperatures of 80-85 degrees F. Spinach loves shade, and can be planted underneath tall plants such as corn or pole beans.

Growing: Because pulling weeds can disturb the roots of spinach, apply a layer of mulch. Keep the soil moist but not too wet, since an imbalance in the water supply can cause bolting. If the temperature rises above 80 degrees F, provide some sort of shade. Bloomsdale does tolerate some heat.

Harvesting: Begin harvesting the spinach leaves as soon as they grow big enough for eating. If only individual leaves are being harvested, take the larger ones on the outside of the plant. Otherwise, harvest the entire plant by cutting it off at ground level; new leaves will grow. If the plant bolts and sends up a flower stalk, the leaves will be much stronger in flavor but can still be used.

RAINBOW SWISS CHARD

Sowing: Direct sow rainbow Swiss chard seeds for planting about a week after the last spring frost, planting it 1/2" deep in compost-enriched soil in full sun. For harvesting the entire plant, space the plants 4-5" apart; for continual harvesting of the outer stalks, space the plants 8-10" apart for larger growth. For a continuous summer crop, plant more Swiss chard every two weeks. Germination should occur in about a week. Swiss chard can survive light frosts, and can be planted as a fall crop.

Growing: Keep the soil evenly moist and weed free with a layer of mulch. Moisture is especially crucial to the seedlings in the first stages of their growth.

Harvesting: Individual leaves can be harvested for greens as soon as they reach a height of 6-8". The whole plant can be cut at the surface of the soil, but to ensure continued growth and another harvest, leave an inch of stem. Outer stalks can also be harvested individually, leaving the heart to grow.

RED RUSSIAN KALE

Sowing: Since kale thrives in cool weather and sweetens with frost, it grows best as a fall crop. For an earlier crop in areas with a cool summer, sow the red Russian kale seeds in early spring; plant three seeds in a cluster, 1/2" deep and 16-18" apart in rows 2-3' apart. Thin the clusters to the strongest plant when the seedlings emerge. Kale appreciate very rich, moist soil that drains well, since they taste best when allowed to grow quickly. For a fall crop, plant the red Russian kale seeds in the same way about three months before the first expected frost. For companion planting benefits, buy these kale seeds and plant them with cabbage or potatoes.

Growing: Keep weeds controlled and conserve moisture by applying mulch. Keep the soil evenly moist, but stop watering after the first frost. Red Russian kale survives cold temperatures up to -10 degrees F.

Harvesting: Harvest baby leaves as soon as they grow big enough for salad; harvest bigger leaves as needed. Use a scissors or a knife to cut the leaves, to avoid tearing the stems. To harvest the entire plant, cut it off an inch above ground level. To make the fresh leaves last longer in the fridge, dip the stems in water after cutting them; they should stay fresh for up to a month. Kale also freezes well. Expect to harvest well after frost, since most varieties of kale can survive freezing temperatures.

LETTUCE LEAF BLEND

Sowing: Lettuce does best in full sun, however, if you live in a hot climate then some shade will benefit your lettuce. Find an area that has well-draining soil. Lettuces are a cool season crop and planting in the heat of summer should be avoided, but many varieties mature quickly and often more than one crop can be harvested in spring and late summer.

Growing: Start lettuce seeds indoors or out, by sprinkling seeds in rows or in containers, and covering with a layer of soil. If starting indoors, cover containers with a plastic bag to create a greenhouse effect and keep warm. Sprouts should appear within a week to 10 days. Once sprouted, remove the plastic and provide plenty of light. Once seedlings have a few sets of true leaves, transplant to individual containers. Harden off seedlings about a week before transplanting out of doors. In outdoor beds, either thin or place transplants to desired spacing. We recommend approximately 4 inches apart for leaf lettuce varieties, 8 inches apart for loose-head types, and 16 inches for firm-head types.

Harvesting: Harvest your lettuce when it is full size but not quite mature. You can remove the outer leaves to harvest and leave the inner leaves to grow. You can pull up the entire plant or cut it off if it is a Butterhead and Romaine variety, or you can pick it when the center is firm if it is a Crisphead variety.