

## Carrots Farming

Carrots is a vegetable which is eaten raw or cooked. It is an emerging high value crop; very rich in vitamin A which is what gives the characteristic bright colour and sweetness good to be used in some fruit-like roles. When grated, they can be used in cakes, carrot puddings, blended in jams and other fruits. It has a demand in both small scale use and processors like canneries and dehydration firms.



Image: [Carrot](#)

### Ecological requirements

- Carrots does well in cool to warm areas. The roots are very sensitive to high soil temperatures.
- Deep, loose loam soils which should be well drained and with a pH of 6-6.5. Poor drained soil encourages prevalence of bacterial diseases. Heavy clay soils give low quality, malformed and twisted carrots
- Altitude of 500M above sea level

### Varieties

Carrots varieties can be categorized into two fresh market and processing (canning) varieties. The common varieties are **Nantes**, **Super Kuroda**, **Oxhart** and **Chantney**.

### Planting

Carrots are usually sown directly into a ready bed. To sow carrots:

- Select a bed which is fertile and crops of carrot family has not been previously grown
- Clear any vegetation, plough and harrow to get a fine tilth
- Make shallow drills 1 foot (30cm) apart with a stick or hand

- Mix seeds with soil, manure and fertiliser and spread along the drills. Use planting fertiliser like MAVUNO VEGETATIVE NPK 20:10:18. You need 50kg per acre.
- Sow seeds thinly along the drills and cover with a light soil. You need 2.5 kg of seeds per acre. After 7 days, carrot will start to germinate.

### Management

- After 2-4 weeks, thin to leave a spacing of 10cm from plant to plant. This will allow enough space for good growth
- Weed twice to control weeds before the crop forms canopy. First weeding should be done after 2 weeks when thinning. The second weeding is then done 2-3 weeks later depending on the emergence of weeds. Weed with care to avoid damage to the roots.
- Herbicides like Linuron, Stomp or Dosanex can also be used before and after carrots & weeds grow.
- When the crop is 10cm high, top-dress with nitrogen rich fertiliser like MAVUNO TOPDRESSING NPK 26.0.0 or CAN
- Water / irrigate if there is no frequent rains and the soil is dry



Image: [Excess of manure causes forking](#)

NB: Avoid using manure in growing carrots as it induces forking. This is growth of roots which forms fork-like extensions which are not desirable to consumers.

### Pest and Diseases control

The major diseases to be on the watch include:

**Powdery mildew** - On attack, you will see white-powder like cover on stems and leaves. It is common during wet seasons. Use FLOSOL PLUS or CONTROL 70DF to protect.

**Leaf blight** - It is characterized by brown spots on leaves, brown streaks on the leaf stalk and blighting of floral parts which eventually destroy the whole crop. To control, spray early before attack with fungicides like MISTRESS or MANCOFLO.

**Nematodes** - Nematodes are tiny worm like insects which eat up the roots of carrots. They are common in fields crops like tomatoes or potatoes have been crop over and over. To control, rotate field and use insecticides like NIMBECIDINE

**Aphids** - They are small insects with suck sap of plant. Use effective insecticides like ALPHA DEGREE to control them.

### **Harvesting**

Carrots takes 3-4 months after planting to mature. 2 or 3 weeks before harvesting, stop watering. This increases the sweetness in the carrots. A day before harvesting, water to make it easier to uproot the carrots.

Timing in harvesting is very important. Late harvesting lowers quality as the roots will have cracks. Harvest when the roots are enlarged, soft and juicy. To harvest carrots, pull out by hand or dig out using spade/fork. Finally, cut the top parts to prevent carrots from rotting and grade depending on the size and length. Clean ready for the market.

The upper vegetative part can also be used as livestock fodder.

The expected yield is 10-15 tons per acre but can extend up to 17 tons per acre under proper management.



