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virginia home food production



BEETS DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

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BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 422

ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: tolerates partial shade

SOIL: well-drained, deep loam

FERTILITY: medium-rich
PH: 6.0-7.0

TEMPERATURE: cool (60°-65°)

MOISTURE: moist, but not water logged

CULTURE

PLANTING: sow seed ½" deep as soon as soil can be tilled

SPACING: 2-3" x 12-18"

HARDINESS: hardy annual

FERTILIZER NEEDS: heavy feeder (4½ lbs. 10-10-10 per 100 square feet mixed well with soil before planting)

CULTURAL PRACTICES: Beets are fairly frost hardy and should be planted early in the spring. High temperatures make the beets woody, therefore beets should not



be grown for a summer crop.

Because the beet "seed" is actually a cluster of seeds, thinning is very important to ensure good root development. Overcrowding causes small, poor quality roots. Crop rotation is important to control leaf spot.

COMMON PROBLEMS

DISEASES: Cercospora leaf spot

INSECTS: Leaf miners, aphids

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CULTURAL: woody textured roots
(high temperatures, lack of
water)
poor root development (over
crowding)
internal black spots in roots,
dead bottom leaves (Boron defi-
ciency, 1 tablespoon household
borax to 12 quarts of water per
100 square feet. If soil is
acid, lime according to soil test.)

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1 cup cooked beets

<u>Grams</u>	<u>Calories</u>	<u>% U.S. RDA</u>
17	60	<u>Vitamin C</u> 15

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

DAYS TO MATURITY: 45-65 days
from seed

HARVEST: Beets can be harvested
when roots are 1-3" in diameter.
Roots larger than 3" tend to
be woody. If greens are going
to be used, the roots should be
1-1½" in diameter.

APPROXIMATE YIELDS: (per 10 foot
of row) 8-10 lbs.

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON:
5-10 lbs.

STORAGE: cold (32°F) moist
(95% RH) conditions; 3-5
months (greens removed)

PRESERVATION: pickle, freeze

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