



BEET ROOT (*Beta vulgaris*) FARMING

- **Beetroot** is a great vegetable, able to provide you with anti-cancer and heart-protection properties thanks to its red pigments.
- Easy to grow, it is one of the top 10 vegetables grown in the home garden.

Soil and planting

- Beetroot likes neutral soil without too much lime or acid (pH 6.5-7.0).
- The soil should be soft and not have too much clay or too much sand; however, since the root develops at the surface, a clay soil can be tolerated if the top has been loosened by the addition of lots of well-rotted organic matter (don't add this unless the soil has much clay).
- The position needs to be sunny and open but it will tolerate part shade.
- Remove weeds and any other debris, as well as any stones that might impede root growth.
- The soil only needs tilling to one spade blade of depth
- Sow beetroot seeds 2cm deep. Keep seeds or seedlings apart at a distance of 5 to 10cm

Agronomic practices

Watering

- Water daily. Do this until the leaves begin to sprout.
- The roots will take moisture from the soil once they're established.
- Avoid over-watering. This causes beetroot to produce more leaves and fewer roots. And under-watering creates woody roots.
- Fertilise. Add 4-6 litres of complete organic fertiliser per 10 square metres of bed.
- Add a *thin* layer of compost or well-rotted manure.
- Weeding Avoid using hoes or other sharp objects near the roots or you might cut them. Hand weeding is best.

Harvesting

- When you can start seeing the root, you will have a good idea of its size.
- The beetroots are ready to harvest when they are approximately the size of a smallorange; too large and they won't be as tasty