

Carrot farming in Kenya

Carrots are found in many colours; yellow, red, orange and purple. The orange carrots get their deep colour from beta carotene and antioxidants which the body converts into vitamin A. Carrots are also a good source of beta carotene, fibre, vitamin K 1, potassium and antioxidants.

Common varieties of carrots include chutney, nantes and oxheart. Nantes have a deep orange colour, sweet taste, smooth and long, have a longer shelf life and can be grown in all seasons.

Benefits of carrots

Carrots are a weight loss friendly food, they lower cholesterol, improve eye health and contain carotene and antioxidants that reduces the risks of cancer.

They are consumed fresh, can be added to juices, vegetables or stew for taste and others processed, packed and exported to foreign markets.

Carrot farming

Carrot farming produce high yields on even a small piece of land and have shorter maturity periods compared to other crops like maize and coffee. They require minimum attention to manage.

Carrots take about 4 months to mature. One can check by removing some soil; if the carrot has reached one inch diameter they have matured.

Conditions for farming

Carrots do well in places where temperatures ranges from 15 to 200 degrees, well drained soils except clay or stony soils and

areas that are too hot.

Carrots planted in soils with excess animal manure will produce forking carrots. Forking carrots are not easily bought in the market as buyers prefer straight and long carrots.

Planting

Carrots can be planted through broadcast approach and furrows. When using broadcasting, the carrot seeds are broadcasted, watered and left to germinate without the farmer covering them.

Using the furrow method, make an unraised bed with 1/2 inch deep furrows to contain the seeds. Planting in furrows allows farmers to thin and weed crops well. Thin them within the first two weeks of germination.