

# GROWING PARSNIPS

*Parsnips are easy to grow and care for. These delicious roots will provide comfort and nutrition for the winter months. They are rich in fibre, potassium, vitamin C, K, and folate, and are very versatile in the kitchen.*

## Seed Sowing

Sow your parsnip seeds directly from April till May, ensuring the soil is weed-free, light, and well-draining. Do not add manure before planting, as this can cause roots to fork. Sow in rows 30 cm apart and place 3 seeds every 15 cm; thin them out when they are around 3 cm tall to 1 per 15 cm. They are slow to germinate, so you can also sow some radish to mark your rows and help with weeding later; the radish will be ready for harvest as the parsnip takes off.

## Transplanting

Parsnips are best sown in situ, as they do not like root disturbance, which can cause them to split into many thin roots.

## Plant Care

Parsnip care is straightforward; keep it weed-free, remove any yellowing leaves, and water during hot spells.

## Challenges

Parsnip is related to carrots, so some of the same pests can affect them. Carrot root flies lay eggs on young plants, and the grubs eat their way down into the roots. They will leave brown tracks all over your roots; they are still edible but will need peeling. Using netting can prevent attacks.

## Harvest

Dig up as needed in late autumn and winter; it's best to harvest after the first frost but not necessary. Once the leaves start to die back, they are ready. If you have heavy soil, you can also dig them all up at

once and store in a clamp overwinter; make sure any you store do not have carrot root fly damage.

## Culinary Ideas

Parsnips are delicious. Their sweetness and chewy crunch when roasted to perfection is a must for the perfect Sunday roast. While we all know they're great for curries, soups, and stews, they're a versatile vegetable. Parsnip latkes, parsnip gnocchi, parsnip and maple cake are all good options.

## Seed Saving

To save parsnip seeds, grow at least 20 plants into their second year. You can do this in situ or dig up and store in a clamp overwinter for replanting in spring. Parsnips are insect-pollinated, so they need to be isolated or at least 1 mile from other parsnips, including wild parsnips.

Harvest when the seed head has turned brown; remove seed heads and leave them in a dry, well-ventilated place to dry for at least 10 days. Rub the seeds off the dry plant and store in a cool, dry place. Stored this way, seeds can remain viable for 1 or 2 years.