



Easy Gardening Radishes

Jerry Parsons and Sam Cotner*



O Radishes are a cool season crop and do not do well in the hot summer months. They are grown for the root which usually is eaten raw, alone or in salads. Radishes, which can grow in partial shade, require very little room and mature quickly. They are well suited to small gardens, flower beds and containers.

Soil Preparation and Fertilizing

Radishes need loose, well-drained soil for easy root expansion. If the soil is crusty, roots become misshapen.

Remove rocks, trash and large sticks from the planting area. Small pieces of plant material such as grass and leaves can be mixed into the soil to make it richer.

Spade the soil 8 to 12 inches deep. Turn each shovelful completely over so all plant material is covered. Scatter 1 cup fertilizer such as 10-20-10 on the soil for each 10 feet of row to be planted. Rake the soil until smooth and work up beds as shown (Figure 1).

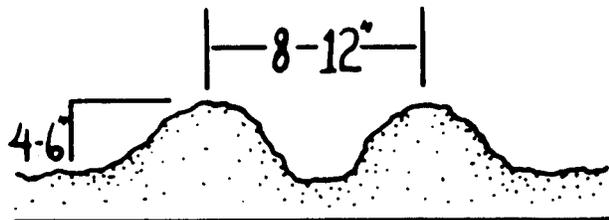


Fig. 1. The 4-inch ridges are very important in low, poorly drained areas. They allow the soil to drain and let air enter the soil.

Space ridges farther apart if the radishes are to be followed by a summer crop. Plant two or more rows of radishes on each ridge.

Planting

Radishes usually are the first vegetable harvested from a spring garden! In many South Texas areas, they are grown all winter. Plant them as soon as the soil can be worked in the spring.

Using a hoe handle, stick or similar object, make a furrow 1/2 inch deep down the center of the ridge.

Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep and 1 inch apart in the row (Figure 2). Cover lightly with loose soil and sprinkle with water. Plants should be up in 4 to 6 days.

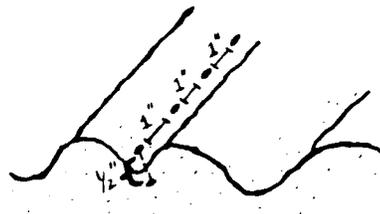


Fig. 2. Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep and 1 inch apart in the row

Begin thinning radishes when roots start expanding. Pull every other plant (Figure 3). Larger ones can be eaten. Those left in the row will get larger without being crowded.



Fig. 3. To thin radishes, pull every other plant

*Respectively, Extension horticulturist (vegetable) and Extension horticulturist, The Texas A&M University System.

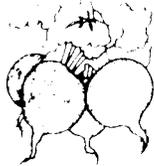
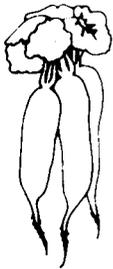
Make several plantings 8 to 10 days apart for a steady supply of radishes. They will be ready for harvest about 4 to 5 weeks from planting. Ten feet of row per planting usually is enough for a family of four.

Varieties

Red and white types of radishes generally are grown in Texas.

Cherry Belle
Sparkler
White Icicle

Red radishes, the most popular type, are round or oval shaped.



The white type can be globe shaped or long like a carrot.

After Planting

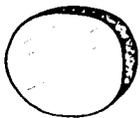
Keep radishes free of weeds because weeds rob weak root systems of nutrients and moisture.

Scratch the soil around the plants lightly with a rake or hand tool to keep the soil from crusting. Water the plant well if it does not rain weekly.

Harvesting

Pull radishes when they are young and tender. If left in the ground too long, they get tough, hot tasting and stringy.

Pull the radishes; cut off the tops and small roots and put them in a compost pile. Wash radishes and place them in the refrigerator. They will keep 2 to 3 weeks or until the next planting is ready for harvest.



Center should be solid with no cracks.

Overmature radishes with pithy or cracked center.



Insects



Name and description Control

Aphid - 1/8-inch long; green, pink, red, brown; feeds on underside of leaf; sucks plant juices

Check with your county Extension Agent



Flea beetle - 1/16-inch long; black, brown, striped; jumping beetle; eats small holes in leaves

Check with your county Extension Agent



Cabbage maggot - 1/4- to 1/2-inch long; yellowish-white, legless; feeds on radish root

Check with your county Extension Agent

Before using a pesticide, read the label. Always follow cautions, warnings and directions.

Diseases

Since radishes mature so quickly, diseases usually are not a problem. If radish plants appear diseased, ask your county Extension agent or gardening assistant for help.

Serving

Radishes are eaten raw by themselves or in salads. They are colorful, tasty and good for you.

Cleanup

After the radishes get too old or start going to seed, pull and place them in a compost pile if the soil is to be replanted soon. If the soil is to be left idle, old radishes and tops can be spaded into the soil. This helps build the soil.

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