PLANT FACT SHEET

Daucus carota subsp. sativus (Hoffm.) Schubl. & G. Martens

GENUS *Daucus* **FAMILY** Apiaceae

COMMON NAMES Carrot

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Root, Leaves, Seeds-flavouring, Vegetable

Both the roots and the leaves are edible. The young leaves are used in soups.
The roots can be eaten raw or cooked. They can be steamed, fried, pickled, made into jam, or used in stews.
Carrot seed oil is used as a flavouring.
The juice is used raw and fermented.
The roots can be dried and the flour used to flavour and thicken soups.

DESCRIPTION

A root crop grown from seed. It normally grows a fattened root one year then forms a flower the next year. It can be 60 cm high and spread to 50 cm wide. The root is long in shape and orange in colour. The stem is erect, tough and furrowed. The leaves are feathery and divided 3 times. The leaves have a sheath clasping the stalk at the base. The flowers are white and lacy. They form a dense compound cluster at the top of the plant. Sometimes flowers are only produced into the second year of growth, depending on temperature.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. In the tropics it is mostly grown in the highlands, but will grow from sea level to 2600 m altitude. Sometimes on the coast only leaves are produced. Carrots are frost resistant. In Nepal carrots are grown up to 1700 m altitude. It needs a deep loose soil. Seed germinate well in the temperature range 7-24°C. Plants grow well with a temperature about 15°C. It grows best with a pH of 6.0-7.0. It suits hardiness zones 3-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They are grown from seeds sown directly. Because seed are very small, seed are mixed with sand before sowing to allow a more even distribution of plants. A spacing 5 cm apart in rows 15-20 cm apart is suitable. Often this spacing is achieved by thinning out plants. For seed production a low temperature of 4-9°C for 40-60 days is needed before flowering to break the dormancy.

Harvesting and Seed Production

There are tropical varieties that mature within 90-110 days.

NOTES

There are about 22-25 Daucus species.

PICTURES

Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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