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How to Grow Radishes

By Dr. Mercola | November 10, 2017

Radishes are crisp, colorful and delicious. When served raw or added to salads, radishes add a burst of bold, peppery flavor. The beauty of planting radishes is twofold: They mature in about 25 days and you can grow them in both spring and fall. Radishes are a low-calorie food that is a good source of vitamin C and other antioxidants.

They help detoxify your blood, prevent cancer, purify your kidneys and urinary system and regulate your blood pressure. If you are looking for a fast-growing vegetable to add color and a flavorful zing to salads and other dishes, you may be interested in learning more about how to grow radishes.

How to Grow Radishes

Regardless of the variety you choose, if you are new to vegetable gardening or want to teach your children to garden, radishes are an easy beginner's crop. They grow well from direct seeding (less well from transplants) and mature quickly. Within a few days of the seeds going into the ground, you will see tiny plants poking their heads above the soil.

If you plant Cherry Belle or French Breakfast, you will be eating fully formed radishes in about 25 days. Although radishes are hardy and would do well in most soil conditions, below are a few of the main variables to consider when planting them:

- **Soil:** Radishes will thrive in loosely packed, well-drained soil. Choose soil with a neutral pH and ensure it is kept moist. Do not add nitrogen or other nutrients because they may interfere with the growth of radish bulbs. Also, avoid planting your radishes in hard-packed soil, which may make it difficult for the bulbs to form properly.

Avoid planting radishes in the same place year after year. For best results, practice a three-year crop rotation.

- **Spacing:** Direct sow your radish seeds one-half inch deep and about one-half inch apart. Set your rows 12 inches apart. When the plants are about 2 inches tall, thin them to 1 to 2 inches apart for standard varieties and 3 to 6 inches apart for larger winter varieties. Radishes will not grow well if they are crowded.

- **Sun:** Radishes are a cool-weather crop but require full sun for maximum yield. If planted in excessive shade — or even if they are overly shaded by larger vegetables growing near them — radishes will put their energy into producing larger leaves. This impressive top-level growth will steal nutrients from the roots and you'll end up with immature bulbs. Radishes do not do well in intense heat, so suspend growing during the hot summer months.

- **Timing:** Plant radishes in the spring, as soon as you can work the soil, but while the overnight temperatures are still in the 40- to 50-degree F range. The best timing is generally about four to six weeks before the last expected frost in your area. To ensure a ready supply of radishes throughout the growing season, sow seeds biweekly (or weekly if you are a radish lover) through midsummer. If a fall harvest is desired, begin sowing seeds in late summer through the first hard frost.

- **Watering:** For quick growth and the best flavor, keep the soil evenly moist, but not waterlogged. Because they

produce bulbs, radishes need adequate and consistent moisture throughout the growing season. Radishes that are dry will crack and split open. Cracking will negatively affect the flavor and diminish the aesthetics of your radish crop.

Radishes Are a Super Low-Calorie Food

Radishes are surprisingly low in calories. Although it is unlikely you would eat 10 large, raw radishes in one sitting, which equates to roughly a 3.5-ounce serving, it would only amount to 16 calories. That serving size would also give you:

- 3 grams of carbohydrates
- 2 grams of fiber
- 2 grams of sugar
- 1 gram of protein
- 39 milligrams of sodium

One serving of radishes provides 25 percent of your recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of vitamin C, as well as 5 percent of your RDA for potassium, 2.5 percent for magnesium and 2 percent each for both calcium and iron.

The Health Benefits of Radishes

Radishes have wonderfully beneficial antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and detoxifying properties. They contain the powerful flavonoids beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin. According to The Guardian, radishes, similar to other vegetables in the brassica family, are good for you because:

“[R]adishes contain two natural compounds, sulforaphane and indole-3, which in animal and lab studies have shown an anti-cancer action. It is thought that these antioxidant substances may slow or stop the growth of several different types of cancer, possibly by prompting the body to make higher levels of detoxifying enzymes. Radishes also give you a significant amount of vitamin C to boost your defenses against disease.”

Indoles are detoxifying agents, and sulforaphane is an important isothiocyanate antioxidant compound shown to be an inhibitor of breast, colon, ovarian and prostate cancer. Eating radishes also:

Cleanses your blood of toxins and waste, including excess bilirubin, which causes jaundice

Keeps your digestive system regular and acts as a natural diuretic to help purify and flush your kidneys and urinary system

Inhibits red blood cell damage by supplying fresh oxygen to your blood

Regulates your blood pressure

Relieves congestion and prevents respiratory problems, such as asthma or bronchitis

Soothes dry skin, rashes and other skin disorders

Considering their many health benefits and the ease with which they can be grown in your garden, radishes are a vegetable you may want to consider eating more often.