

# Harvest of the Month

## Carrots



### Did You Know?

- The average person eats 17 pounds of carrots per year.
- Carrots contain about 90% water.

### How Do Carrots Grow?

Carrots are biennial, meaning they have a two-year life cycle. In the first year, the edible root is formed, followed by production of the flower and seeds in the second year. The ideal temperature range for carrots is 60 to 70 F. They need deep, loose, well-drained soils.

### Health and Nutrition

Make half your meal plate fruits and vegetables and be active every day. Drink water instead of sugary drinks. (Sugary drinks are the largest single source of added sugar in the American diet.) Doing these things may lower the risk of serious health problems like obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer. A cup of carrots is an excellent source of vitamin A. **Vitamin A helps keep good vision, fight infection, and keep skin and hair healthy.** The high soluble fiber content in carrots reduces bad cholesterol and promotes digestive system health.



### What's in a Name?

**Pronunciation:** k'ar'et  
**Spanish name:** zanahoria  
**Family:** Apiaceae **Genus:** *Daucus*  
**Species:** *D. carota*

The carrot is a root vegetable of the same family as parsley and celery. The edible part of a carrot is known as a "taproot." This plant is cultivated for its enlarged edible root and its leaves are fine and lacy. In fact, the wild carrot is actually a familiar wildflower known as "Queen Anne's lace."



Carrots were originally cultivated in Central Asia, near Afghanistan thousands of years ago. The ancient ancestors of the modern carrot were not orange, but purplish colors ranging from lavender to almost black. The orange carrot was developed in Holland as a tribute to William I of Orange during the Dutch fight for independence from Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

Carrots contain plant pigments called *carotenoids*, of which beta carotene is a member. These plant pigments were first identified in carrots (giving them their orange color) and, therefore, their name was derived from the word *carrot*.

Baby-cut carrots are made from full-grown carrots. The carrots are shaped into 2-inch pieces by automated cutters. The first baby cut carrots were made in a machine that was originally made to cut green beans combined with a machine that originally peeled potatoes.