

How to Plant, Grow and Harvest Turnips



How to Plant Turnips

Plant seeds about ¼ inch deep.

If growing for the roots, space seeds 2-4 inches apart, or thin the seedlings after germination.

If you opt to thin the seedlings, these microgreens are great in salads or on sandwiches.

If growing for the greens, seeds can be planted closer together.



Where to Plant

Turnips grow best in loose, fertile, crumbly soil, where they'll receive at least 8 hours of sunlight each day.

Avoid planting turnips after other plants in the Brassica (a.k.a. mustard/cole) plant family.



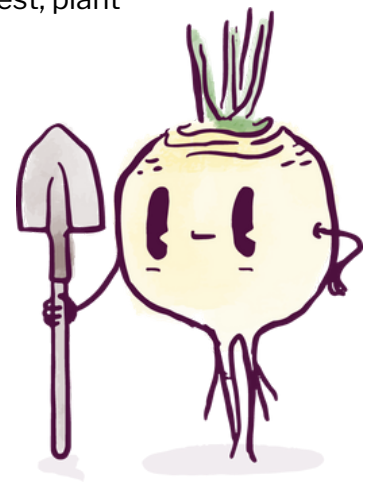
When to Plant

Turnips are a quick-growing, cool-weather crop.

Direct-sow turnip seeds in the spring and at summer's end/beginning of autumn.

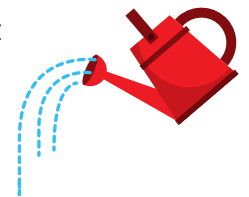
For an October harvest, plant seeds in August.

Turnips are able to tolerate frosts and light freezes. More mature plants tolerate freezing temperatures better than young seedlings.



How to Care for Turnip Plants

Keep seedlings well-watered to get them through the hot, dry end of summer. Flavor becomes more pungent if conditions are too dry.



Pests and weeds will be prolific at this time due to the lingering heat. Keep the area immediately around your turnip seedlings weeded, and keep an eye out for pests, like flea beetles.

Hoeing and/or hand cultivation helps keep the soil loose and the weeds at bay.



Containers

Containers need to be big enough to support the full potential growth of whatever is planted in them.

For turnips, use at least 2 gallon containers (or containers that are about 10-12 inches deep).

Make sure whatever container you use has drainage holes

How to Harvest

Harvest turnip greens in the morning.

Using scissors or your clean hands, cut the outer most leaves first. New leaflets will eventually come in, and you'll be able to harvest the greens again.

Turnip roots should be harvested when they are about 2-3 inches in diameter. With your hand gripping where the greens meet the root, gently pull out of the ground.

Companion Plants

Companion plants help each other grow well by deterring certain pests and attracting beneficial insects.

Consider planting some of these plants with your turnips in the garden: clover, fennel, dill, nightshade family plants, flowers like nasturtium, zinnia, sunflower, cosmos, sweet alyssum, and marigolds.



Soil

You can either purchase a vegetable potting mix from a garden center or make your own.

Combining equal parts of compost, peat moss or coconut coir and vermiculite, perlite and/or sand makes for a good potting mix.

Further increase your probability of success by adding some organic fertilizer to your mix. Use about a cup of fertilizer per 5 gallons of soil mix. Reapply about once per month.

