



# RUTABAGA & TURNIP GROWING GUIDE

Turnips and rutabagas are closely-related cool-season root crops, members of the cabbage family. They can generally be grown as either an early spring or fall crop.

Rutabagas, or Swedish turnips (“Swedes”) tend to be somewhat larger, sweeter, and milder-flavored than turnips. Our Joan Rutabaga has uniform purple tops with yellow flesh and is very sweet and mild, while American Purple top is a very popular variety throughout North America. Nadmorska, originating in Latvia, will taste even better after a hard frost.

Turnip varieties available are Golden Globe, which has a fine, sweet, tender taste and is great for mashing. Our Purple Top White Globe is fast growing, yielding tender white flesh.

Both vegetables can be enjoyed steamed, baked, lightly fried, and raw in salads. Some folks even mash them up like potatoes. The greens are tasty when boiled, especially when seasonings or salt pork are added, and can also spice up salads.

| WHEN TO SOW                           | SUN / PART SHADE | SEED SPACING     | ROW SPACING | PLANTING DEPTH | SPACING AFTER THINNING | DAYS TO GERMINATE | DAYS TO MATURITY |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Rutabagas, Early spring / late summer | Sun              | 2 seeds per inch | 1 foot      | ½ inch         | 6-8 inches             | 3-14              | 80-90            |
| Turnips, Early spring / late summer   | Sun              | 2 seeds per inch | 1 foot      | ½ inch         | 2 inches               | 3-14              | 45-70            |

## Soil and Fertilizing

Both turnips and rutabagas prefer loose, well-drained soils with a pH of 6.0–6.8. It is important to loosen the soil well, so their roots have room to expand properly.

It's best to have your soil tested before planting, so you know what nutrients and pH adjustments may be needed. For a thorough soil test, consult your local county extension office. Fertilize and lime as directed by your soil test results.

## Planting

Direct sow rutabagas and turnips by seed. Be sure to rotate your crops annually, and try not to plant either turnips or rutabagas where other cabbage vegetables have grown recently. Peas are a good companion plant.

## Watering

Rutabagas can do with moderate watering, since their roots are deep. Turnips, however, will need more frequent watering. A good, deep soaking of about one inch once a week is sufficient.

## Harvesting / Storage

Harvest turnips when the roots are about 1½-2 inches in diameter. Rutabagas need about 90 days to reach maturity. They should be 2½-4 inches in diameter at harvest. You can take their greens at the same time, or you can harvest them at any time during the growing period. We recommend you take only a few leaves at a time, ideally from the outside of the leaf cluster, so the plant retains enough leaves to ensure the turnip matures fully.

Turnips and rutabagas store well in refrigerator or in a cold root cellar. Both are hardy to fall frosts and may, in fact, be sweetened by cool weather.

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For soil testing or other questions specific to your growing climate, please contact your local county extension agent. Visit <http://www.almanac.com/content/cooperative-extension-services> to find the office nearest you.