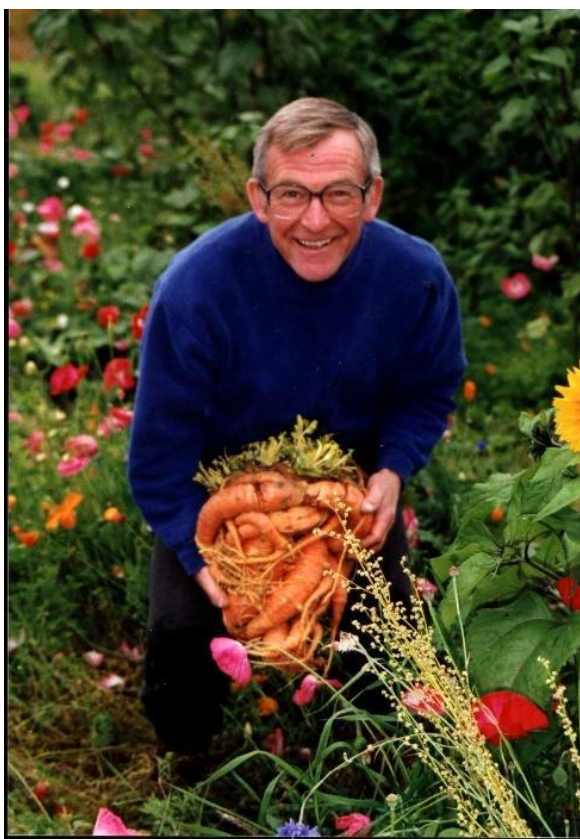


## HEAVY CARROT

Carrots are the easiest and cheapest type of giant vegetable to grow, and one of the hardest to grow a world record with. Carrots take up little space, the seed is cheap and readily available, they do not require artificial heat, thrive on fresh air and can be grown outdoors. Yet the old carrot record took 16 years to be broken. In 1998, John Evans grew a carrot weighing 19lbs. The record held till 2014 when Peter Glazebrook grew one weighing one pound more.



*John Evans*

### SEEDS AND SOIL

There are many types of carrots, even many different colours. For heavy carrot purposes, it is important to use so-called winter carrots with broad shoulders and a long growing season. It is best to use Dutch varieties such as Flakkee or Berlicumer. The Dutch were the ones who

cultivated the traditional white and yellow wild varieties into the orange ones we know today.

There are basically two ways to grow giant carrots: the single root way and the multiple root way. Either way, sowing starts in late winter. This can be done out in the garden with enough protection or inside at room temperature with sufficient lighting. The clue is to start a whole bunch of seeds and pick out the strongest ones. Start them out in a six-inch tall pot or raised bed. The ideal growing mixture is 1/3 sand, 1/3 soil and 1/3 peat. The soil must be deeply cultivated and contain a high content of humus or organic material, with a pH of around 6.5-7.0. The benefit of a raised bed is that the soil does not compact as easily and there is less chance of rotting, which giant carrots do quite easily.

It is best to sow seeds every few weeks from January to March as an insurance policy for bad weather, etc. That being said, the longer they grow, the better. It is a good idea to grow about 6 seeds for each growing position. The growing positions should be about 2 feet away from each other in each direction.



*Peter Glazebrook*

### THE SINGLE ROOT WAY

Single root carrots look much better and can still get extremely heavy. There is less chance of rotting, though they still don't like too much

water. Some growers start them off in 6 inch tubes inside and then transplant them later into the final position, without disturbing the roots. The benefit here is the longer growing season without a check made when transplanting.



*Bernhard Lavery and his single root record*

### **THE MULTIPLE ROOT WAY**

The clue here is to transplant the carrot while cutting off the tip. This will cause the main root to stop growing and trigger the hair roots to thicken up. You get a tangled up mess with a bit bigger chance of rot developing amongst the roots, but many growers have been very successful with this method.

The method is quite simple. You dig up your seedlings when they are about 5-6 inches tall. You carefully shake the soil off and select the strongest looking plant and cut off the bottom inch from the main root. You then make a deep hole in the ground with a cane and carefully transplant your mutilated carrot into it. Water it

gently every day until the carrot plant has fully recovered.



*Ian Neale*

### **FEEDING**

Don't give the plant extra feeding until it has well-established itself. In the summer you can give it a balanced feed (say 20-20-20) once a week in the evening. Never let your soil dry out or get too wet. This will cause splitting and ultimately rotting. If necessary protect it from rain.

### **HARVESTING**

Be careful when taking these things out of the ground. You don't want to break any of the side roots. It is best to take away the soil near the carrot with your fingers. You can carefully hose the carrot off with lukewarm water while holding it by the foliage. Submerging it into water can cause it to split.

The carrots should be clean and in sound condition (that is no wet rotten parts). The

foliage must be cut off as close to the shoulder as possible.



*Dan MacCoy's carrot 2016*

### **DISEASES**

Carrot root fly is the deadliest enemy of the carrot. The fly lays its eggs alongside the root, and these eventually hatch into white maggots which bore into the carrot and cause rotting along its whole length. Carrot flies generally fly no higher than a few inches, so raised beds will help. There is also special carrot fly netting available and otherwise apply insecticide powder or granules to the whole growing area, a week after the seeds have been sown and add on whenever needed.



*Carrots affected by carrot fly*

Slugs, snails and woodlice can also be a problem. While woodlice like seedlings, slugs and snails will even take bites out of the carrot itself.