

Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Plant from seed in full sun as soon as soil can be worked. Plant seeds ¼-inch deep and one inch apart in rows 18 inches apart. Thin to 3-4 inch spacing. Consider using a floating row cover for insect control early in the season. Water consistently with 1-2 inches of water per week. For more growing information look for the MontGuide, *Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden* at www.msueextension.org or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Begin harvest when beets are one inch in diameter. Harvest before beets exceed 2-3 inches in diameter.

Selection

Select beets with firm skins. Beets should be round with a slender tap root. Smaller beets are more tender. If greens are still attached, select beets with fresh looking leaves.

Storage

Beets can be stored in a plastic bag for up to two weeks. Beets can also be stored in a cold, humid cellar.

Nutrition Information

Most vegetables are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium and are gluten-free. Beets are high in folate and magnesium with only 25 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Bake. Pierce and wrap washed beets in foil and bake at 350 °F for 45 to 90 minutes or until tender.

Grill. Place 1/2-inch thick slices in a plastic bag; drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until beets are coated. Then put slices on skewers over a preheated (medium-high heat) grill. Cook 15-20 minutes or until tender, turning the skewer occasionally.

Juice. Combine one cup 100% orange juice or apple juice and the juice of one small beet in a juicer. Add to a smoothie for added flavor and nutrition.

Microwave. Place two to three small beets in a small amount of water and microwave for 8-15 minutes or until soft.

Roast. Slice 1/2-inch thick. Place in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and seasonings. Shake until beets are coated. Spread on baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 30-40 minutes or until tender.

Salad greens. Rinse leaves thoroughly before adding to a salad. Tender greens are excellent for seasonal salads.

Stir-fry or soup. Sliced beets and their leaves are a colorful addition to stir-fry and homemade soup.

Season. To enhance the flavor, use allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, dill weed, ginger or nutmeg.

Preserve. For more information on preserving beets, look for MontGuides: *Freezing Vegetables*; and *Home Canning Pressures and Processing Times*. Visit www.msueextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.



Food Safety Tips

1. **Clean.** Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. **Chill.** Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. **Separate.** Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.
4. **Cook.** Cook food to a safe temperature.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov

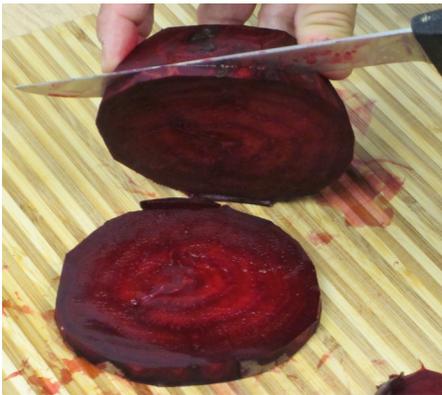
Preparation: Step-by-Step



Wash hands. Remove leaves and cut stem down, leaving approximately one inch to prevent bleeding and flavor loss. Thoroughly scrub beets to remove dirt or sand.



When cooked whole, leave root end attached to prevent bleeding. Trim and peel with a vegetable peeler. It is not necessary to peel small, young beets with tender skins, but larger beets should be peeled before use.



Sliced beets can add flavor and color to any dish. Take care when handling beets. They can leave red stains on fabric, cutting boards, and hands. Use salt to clean stained fingers.



To serve: slice, dice or quarter large beets. Small beets may be left whole. If mixing with other ingredients, add just prior to serving to prevent color bleeding onto other foods.

For More Information:

Montana State University Extension: www.msuxextension.org
MSU Extension Master Gardener: www.mtmastergardener.org
MSU Extension Food and Nutrition: www.msuxextension.org/nutrition
MSU Extension Nutrition Education Programs: www.buyeatlivebetter.org

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Fruits & Veggies More Matters. (2012). Beets: Nutrition. selection. storage. <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/beets>
Ohio State University Extension. (2009). Selecting, storing, and serving Ohio beets. Fact Sheet Family and Consumer Sciences. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5510.pdf>
Spice Advice. (2013). Spice usage tips. <http://www.spiceadvice.com/news/usage/chart.html>
University of Illinois Extension. (2013). Beet. *Watch Your Garden Grow*. <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/beet.cfm>