



## RADISH

Douglas C. Sanders, Extension Horticultural Specialist

Radish is a cool-season crop which grows best in spring and fall. It requires 3 to 6 weeks from seeding to harvest.

**Soils**— Because radish grows so rapidly, a rich, fertile soil is essential. For an early crop, sandy or sandy-loam soils are preferred. The soil should be free of stones, clods, lumps, and undecayed organic matter. Thorough seedbed preparation is essential to insure uniform depth of planting.

**Fertilization** — Follow soil test recommendations. A general recommendation would be to broadcast 50 lb of nitrogen (N), 100 lb phosphorous ( $P_2O_5$ ) and 100 lb potassium ( $K_2O$ ) per acre before planting. If radishes follow a heavily fertilized crop, the amount of fertilizer is reduced.

To be mild, tender, and attractive the radishes must be grown rapidly. Slow growth or checked growth results in roots that are tough, woody, pithy, and pungent.

Some of our North Carolina soils are low in boron and result in radishes that have dark spots on and in the root. On such soils, 2 lb of actual boron per acre should be added to fertilizer before the fertilizer is applied.

**Varieties** — The most popular varieties are those that have bright red or red and white round roots, such as Cherry Belle, Early Scarlet Globe, Champion, Comet,

Cherry Beauty, Red Boy, and Sparkler White Tip. White Icicle is the most popular long-rooted spring type. The winter varieties are long and larger rooted, requiring about twice the growing time as the spring varieties. The winter varieties— April Cross, Everest, Omny, Long Black Spanish, and Round Black Spanish— are usually grown as a fall crop for winter storage.

**Planting** — Radish will withstand rather cool weather. It can be planted in the early spring and throughout the summer in the mountains. In the Coastal Plain, radish can be planted from February to mid May and August to October.

Drill the seed  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep in rows 6 to 9 inches apart. With 18 plants per ft in rows 9 inches apart, it will take 20-25 lb of seed per acre. For commercial plantings, it is best to get graded seed to ensure uniform emergence and growth. Larger seeds germinate first and result in earlier marketable roots. The larger winter varieties are spaced 2 to 4 inches apart in the row.

### Approximate Planting Dates

Area	Spring Crop	Fall Crop
<i>Coastal Plain</i>	Feb. 1 - May 15	Aug. 1 - Oct. 15
<i>Piedmont</i>	Feb. 15 - May 15	Aug. 1 - Oct. 1
<i>Mountains</i>	March 15 - June 30	July 1 - Sept. 15

Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.



**Harvesting and Marketing** — Most of the radishes today are harvested by machines and sold in transparent bags. The radish harvester lifts the entire plant, removes the top, and drops the root in a container. This means only one harvest per planting. Because uniformity of the roots is so important, most growers use extreme care in seed sizing, thorough seedbed preparation, and uniform spacing (precision planting) and depth of planting.

Some small growers are still bunching radish for sale. The radishes are pulled and banded in the field. About 8 to 12 roots are put in one bunch. The bunch should be firmly tied with tape, string, twist-ties, or rubber bands. Bunched

radishes are promptly removed from the field, washed thoroughly, packed in cartons, baskets, crates or hampers, and iced for market.

The ideal size for radish roots is  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter. The quick-maturing spring varieties become pithy and pungent if they are not harvested as soon as they reach edible size.

A good yield of bunched radish is 2,500 dozen bunches per acre (about 25 bunches per 30 ft of row). A good yield of film packed radishes (8 oz. bags) is about 15 to 20 bags per 30 ft of row.