

Carrots

1. Name three specific functions that potassium does in the body.

1. Helps with kidney function
2. Important for muscle contraction
3. Helps preserve bone mass, thereby preventing bone loss
4. May help prevent or improve high blood pressure

2. What does the dark orange flesh of a carrot indicate?

The plant pigment carotenoids, of which beta-carotene is a member, gives carrots their orange color.

3. Why should you avoid storing fruits and vegetables together?

As fruits ripen they produce ethylene gas, which decreases the storage life of vegetables.

4. As carrots are so rich in beta-carotene, ask students to research beta-carotene and write a report on the benefits it provides throughout the body.

Beta-carotene is a form of Vitamin A absorbed by the body. It is important for eyesight, healthy skin and hair, and normal growth. It may also help reduce chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

5. What is the result when a carrot is left in the ground for too long after reaching maturity?

Carrots are biennial. This means that if the edible root is formed and allowed to stay in the ground, it will produce flowers and seeds.

6. Ask students to map the different commercial carrot-packing regions.

About 80% of the nation's fresh carrots are grown year round in California. Kern County produces and ships the largest volume of carrots. There are four main carrot-producing regions in California: the Southern San Joaquin Valley/Cuyama Valley, the Southern Desert, the Central Coast, and the High Desert.

7. Have students identify and compare the peak harvest times for carrots in each California region.

Location:	San Joaquin Valley
Planting Period:	December-March; July-September
Harvest Period:	May-July; November-February

Location:	Low desert
Planting Period:	September-November
Harvest Period:	March-May

Location:	High desert
Planting Period:	March-July
Harvest Period:	July-November

Location:	Central coast
Planting Period:	December-August
Harvest Period:	April-January

Sources:
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000068.html

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