

# ROOT VEGGIES: PARSNIP

**Spanish:** chirivía **Russian:** pasternak (пастернак) **Vietnamese:** củ cải vàng

Root vegetables have been part of the human diet for nearly 5 million years. A number of varieties can be harvested in the wild. Early American colonists and settlers were dependent on root vegetables for their ability to be stored underground during long, cold winters. Parsnip is typically considered a winter root vegetable because its sweetness isn't developed until exposure to very cold, near freezing temperatures has occurred for 2-4 weeks in the fall and early winter. The sweetness comes from the starches in the root converting to sugars, giving the parsnip its unique and delicious flavor.

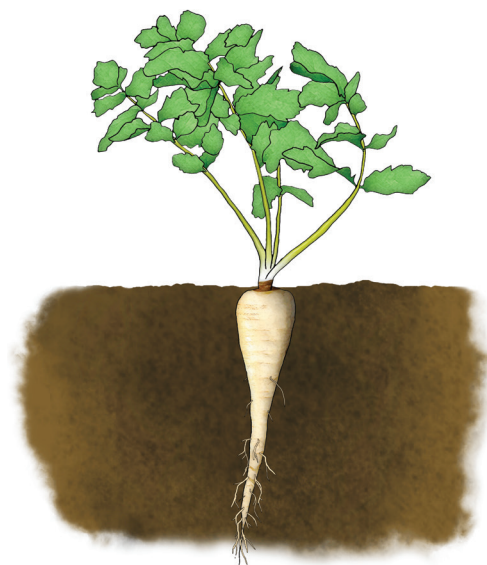
**FIND OUT MORE:**

[http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed\\_News\\_Roots\\_Tubers.pdf](http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed_News_Roots_Tubers.pdf)

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/parsnip.cfm>



## FROM SEED TO PLATE



Like any plant, there are five main components: roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. Depending on the plant, we eat different parts. With root vegetables – we eat the roots! Roots maintain their function of anchoring the plant, absorbing nutrients and water and storing energy for the plant.

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[http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed\\_News\\_Roots\\_Tubers.pdf](http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/download/Fall/21712/Ed_News_Roots_Tubers.pdf)

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Parsnips as pacifiers? In the middle ages, babies in Europe sucked on parsnip roots as pacifiers.**

<http://www.bellybytes.com/food/parsnips.html>

## IN THE GARDEN

Root vegetables like cool weather - parsnip, beets, carrots, radishes, rutabagas, and turnips can all be planted both in early spring and late summer for two crops. This is great for school and early childhood education settings, as students and children can participate in both the planting and the harvesting depending on when classes are in session.



**SUN:** Can tolerate half sun conditions.



**WATER:** Parsnips can handle low water content, but make sure to fully water at least once per week in dry, warm periods.



**SOIL:** Parsnips prefer deep, fertile, loose soil to grow long, straight roots.



**SEEDS:** Parsnips can be direct seeded as early as possible in the spring for mid-summer harvest, and again in the mid – late July for a fall harvest.



**PLANT:** Plant seeds  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches deep, 2-4 inches apart, and in rows at least 18 inches apart. Parsnip seeds have low germination, so seed heavily and thin plants later.



**SPACE:** Space plants within the row 2 - 4 inches apart and space rows at least 18 inches apart.



**CARE:** Make sure to keep the plants free from weeds and competition.



**HARVEST:** Start harvesting parsnips 100-130 days after sowing. Parsnips can be kept in the ground during cool months if frost isn't a threat.

**Note:** Parsnip seeds germinate very slowly under even the best conditions. To make sure you don't plant over the seeds or disrupt them, you can plant a radish seed every 12 inches to mark the boundaries.

## STORAGE AND HANDLING

- Choose parsnips that are firm and do not look overly dried out.
- Avoid parsnips that feel soft or limp.
- Remove any mold, rot or soft spots.
- Store parsnips in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

### FIND OUT MORE:

<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/parsnip.html#storage>

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<http://nwrec.hort.oregonstate.edu/parsnip.html>  
<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/parsnip.cfm>

## IN THE KITCHEN

Parsnips are a wonderful fall and winter treat! Slice and add to a stir-fry; cut in long strips, toss with olive oil and salt and pepper, and roast for a tasty alternative to French fries; add to soups and stews like potatoes; peel or grate to add to salads and wraps.

Try the classroom recipe at home, with this family-size version:

### ROOT VEGETABLE PANCAKES

Serves 4-6

#### INGREDIENTS

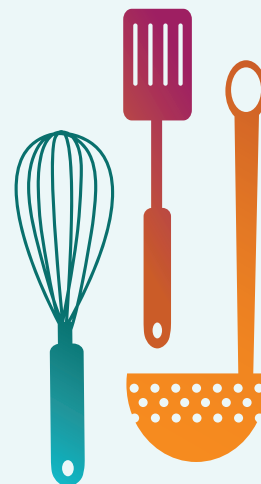
½ lb. parsnips, or a mix of root vegetables (like rutabaga, turnip, or beets)  
2 scallions or green onions, green parts chopped  
2 eggs  
¼ cup of flour  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste  
2-4 Tbs. vegetable oil

*Optional, to serve:*

1Tbs. soy sauce and 1 tsp. rice vinegar (dipping sauce) OR plain yogurt

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Grate root vegetables. Chop scallions/green onions.
2. Whisk eggs in a medium bowl with the salt and pepper. Whisk in flour.
3. Stir in shredded root vegetables.
4. Heat oil in a medium pan or skillet.
5. Form the mixture into patties roughly three inches in size. You should be able to make about 6 patties. Place patties on pan, 2 inches apart. Not all patties will fit in one batch.
6. Cook for 2-3 minutes on the first side, then flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes until browned on both sides.
7. Continue cooking pancakes in batches. Add oil as needed.
8. **Serve hot, plain or with dipping sauce or yogurt**



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

The family newsletter for root vegetables can be sent home at the beginning of the month. The newsletter is available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Print the first page only, or add photos and stories to the second page and print both sides for families.



### GET PARENTS' ATTENTION!

- Attach the newsletter to the child by attaching a string of yarn to the paper and making a newsletter “necklace” or pinning the newsletter to an article of clothing.
- Attach the newsletter to a drawing or other piece of artwork created by the child
- Get a set of “Ask me about \_\_\_\_” stickers or nametags, or use blank nametag stickers to draw attention to the fruit or vegetable of the month. Send each child home with an “Ask me about parsnips!” sticker for the root parsnips month.
- Offer tastes of the recipe of the month at a parent meeting, or when parents pick up their children from your site.



### ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family newsletters engage families as partners in helping children to develop healthy eating habits. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.