

Parsnip

Pastinaca sativa · Carrot family

DIFFICULTY Moderate
TYPE Biennial, grown as annual, direct sown
MATURITY 100–120 days



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Consistent



SOIL PH
6.0–6.8



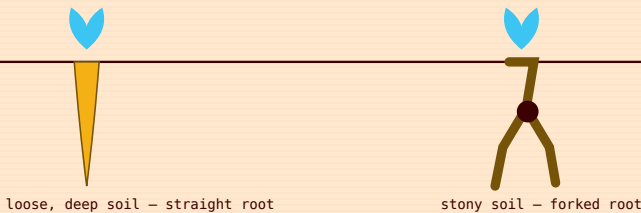
SPACING
10cm × 30cm



DEPTH
1–2cm

01 Soil depth matters

Like carrots, parsnips need deep, loose, stone-free soil for a long, straight root. Sweetness improves after the first light frost.



02 Planting

METHOD	Direct sow — seed loses viability fast, so use fresh seed each year.
SOIL	Deep, loose, stone-free to 30cm.
TIMING	Sow in early spring; slow to germinate (2–3 weeks).

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

04 Problems

- **Canker** — dark rot on the shoulder; improve drainage, avoid excess nitrogen.
- **Forking** — from stony or compacted soil.
- **Carrot fly** — same pest as carrots; use fine mesh.
- **Slow, patchy germination** — always sow fresh seed.

03 Growing care

- Thin to 10cm apart once seedlings are established.
- Keep soil consistently moist — dry spells cause woody roots.
- Mulch to suppress weeds around the slow-growing tops.
- Leave in the ground after frost — cold sweetens the flavour.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Roots reach 15–20cm, especially sweet after a frost.
METHOD	Fork gently from the side to avoid snapping the root.
CURING	None needed.
STORAGE	Can stay in the ground over winter, or fridge 2–4 weeks.
PRESERVING	See Root Cellaring (cool, dark storage without processing) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Onion Garlic Peas	Carrot (competes for same root depth)	Rotate with legumes; avoid following other root crops for 2 years.