

Beets

Did You Know

- The Romans were some of the first people to cultivate and develop beets for their roots as well as use them for feeding animals. The Greeks were the first people to consume both the roots and leaves.
- The color of beet roots can range from dark purple to bright red, yellow, or white. When cut transversely, the roots show light and dark rings, sometimes alternating. The Chioggia beet is red and white-striped and is nicknamed the "candy cane" beet.
- While different in nutrient composition and culinary use, sugar beets are an important part of Montana's economy. Montana is a top producer of sugar beets, harvesting nearly 1.5 million pounds from 44,000 acres in 2014!
- Beets are a source of potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, and magnesium—all great for growing bodies and athletes!
- Although beets are not grown in the winter in Montana, they can be kept fresh in the right storage conditions for months, making them a good vegetable for winter months.

Produce Tips

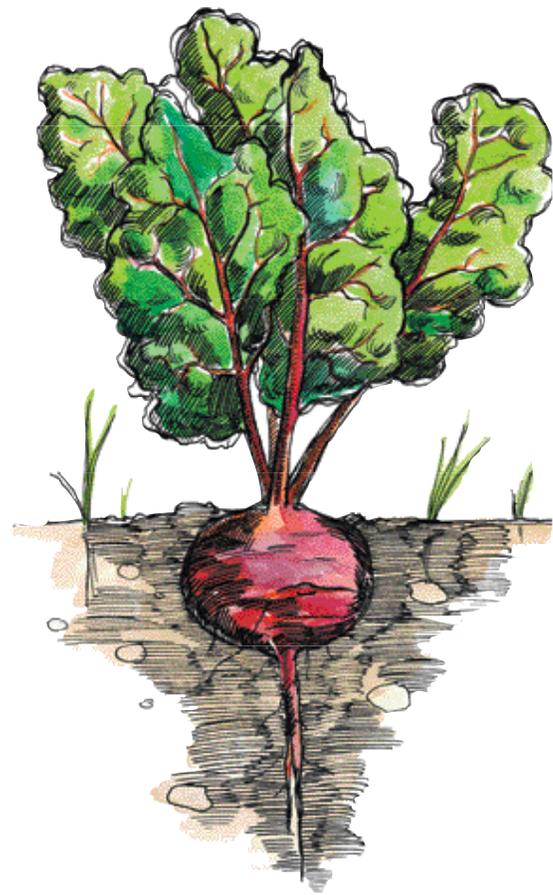
Select beets with firm skins. Smaller beets are more tender. If greens are still attached, select beets with fresh looking leaves. Beet roots can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Remove greens before storing. Beet greens should be used within a few days.

Beets Conversation Starters

- Knock Knock. Who's there? Beets! Beets who? Beets me, I just forgot the joke!
- This beet is purple. It reminds me of ... (a splotch of paint, blackberry jelly)
- What other things can you think of that are purple?
- What words rhyme with beet?
- These beets are so crunchy! I feel like I am crunching into a carrot!

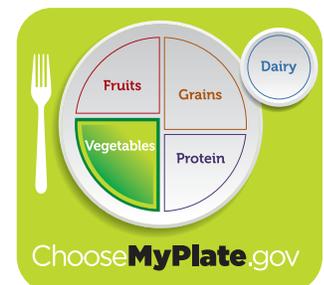
Cooking

Beets are a versatile food that can be eaten roasted, steamed, raw, and pickled. Beets will bleed their red color onto other foods. Cook beets separately from other foods and add at the end of recipes to avoid turning your entire dish pink. Also try golden varieties or Chioggia (red/white striped), which do not bleed their colors. Beet greens can also be eaten raw, steamed, or in recipes in place of greens such as spinach.



Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit:
mtharvestofthemonth.org.



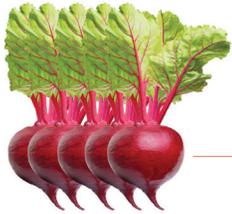
MONTANA Harvest of the Month

Beet Chips

Servings

6

Ingredients



5 beets



2 sweet potatoes



3 Tbsp olive oil



1 Tbsp salt

Tools:



Oven



Metal cookie cutter - any shape you want!



Knife



Baking Sheet



Cutting Board

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Slice beets and sweet potato thinly using a mandolin, or sharp knife. They should be the thickness of a thick potato chip. Cut them as consistently as possible.
3. Cut sliced rounds with metal star-shaped (or whatever your prefer) cookie cutter.
4. On cookie sheet, toss chips with olive oil and salt.
5. Spread evenly on cookie sheet.
6. Roast 20-30 minutes turning halfway through, until crisp. Check often to make sure they don't burn.
7. Let them cool. Eat and enjoy!



2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Beets



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Organic Association, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org

Funds were provided in part by a USDA Team Nutrition Training grant, a USDA Farm to School grant, Montana Healthcare Foundation, Northern Pulse Growers Association, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, and Montana School Nutrition Association. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Montana State University Extension Service is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach. This publication was supported by the Grants or Cooperative Agreements Numbers, 6 U58DP004818-03-01 & 5 U58DP004818-03-00, and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the DPHHS.