



# Kids IN THE Garden

UF | IFAS Extension  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



## ~ Beets ~

### GLOBAL GARDENING

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## Let's travel across the world as we Global Garden

In this series of: Kids in the Garden - Global Gardening, we will explore the fun facts about herbs, vegetables and fruits in your garden. **Let's GO!**

**Beets** — Where in the world do they originate?

Beets originate from the Mediterranean and were called sea beets. They were grown for their edible leaves. However, we think of the beetroot which is the part of the plant we commonly eat — the root. The French started cooking with beets in the 1800s and popularity grew!

How many recipes do you think there are for beets? As you garden, think about your herb or plant and do that extra research to Learn by Doing!

**Another Fun Fact:** How many languages are there for the word beet?

At least 20 ... probably more! In French: Arde, Danish: Bladbede, Gaelic (Irish): Biotais, Haitian Creole: Betrav ... try pronouncing (saying) it in ... Chinese: Bai Gen Tian Cai ! Do you have a friend who speaks another language besides English? What do they call beet in their language? Practice other garden words with your friend .

Turn the page to learn how to grow Beets, propagate the tops for more delicious greens and make delicious a delicious soup from the root!

# Growing Beets

## From Seeds and Tops

**Beets** — Beetroot *Beta vulgaris*, of family Chenopodiaceae and Beta L. genus.

What we commonly refer to as beets, is actually the root of the plant, the beetroot. The leaves of the beetroot can also be eaten in salads or cooked, similar to spinach. Many of parts of many plants can be eaten and we will explore those plant parts in future lessons. Researching your herb, vegetable and fruit crops leads to the discovery of our waste in not eating all the edible, nutritious plant parts. Warning: some plant parts are not safe, so research or inquiry (asking) is important.

The beet plant is very hardy. Some varieties can take two years to grow from seed to ready for harvest (biennial). Beet plants enjoy cool weather so growing on your patio is an option, planting in late fall (October), early winter (January) in Florida\*. It is best to plant beets from seed and you may be able to collect seeds by letting your plant flower. When harvesting beets cut the top, leaving 1/2 inch of stem, eat those nutritious leaves. Place the beet top in water to grow more leaves for your salads or cooking. Yum!

\*For all your gardening, refer to the UF/IFAS EDIS plant guide: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021>



Organic, well-drained to sandy soil makes it a perfect garden addition. Allow depth for the beetroot to develop. A perfect vegetable to grow in decorative pots. You can also use to create a beautiful ornamental landscape that is also edible!

When planting by seed you will need to allow space for growth or thin crowded plants. You can eat the small plants, just add to your salad or cooking.

For more information on Beets, refer to the University of Florida (UF)/ Institute of Food and Agriculture Science (IFAS), Electronic Data Information System (EDIS). A link is below for quick reference. Just copy and paste to go directly to the webpage.

**Borscht** — a sour soup common in Eastern Europe and Northern Asia.

Recipe courtesy of Eating Well – serving size 1 cup

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups reduced-sodium beef or vegetable broth
- 1 medium russet potato, peeled and diced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 ½ cups steamed cubed beets, ½-inch cubes (see tips on website)
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 tablespoons freshly chopped parsley

Tip to prep beets: Trim greens (if any) and root end; peel the skin with vegetable peeler. Cut beets into cubes. You can steam on stovetop or in microwave. KB

### Preparation:

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring, until beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Add broth, potato, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce g=heat and simmer, cover and cook until the potato is just tender, about 8 minutes. Add beets and vinegar; return to a boil. Cover and continue cooking until the broth is deep red and the potato is very soft, 2 to 3 minutes more.
2. Combine sour cream and horseradish in a small bowl. Serve the soup with a dollop of the horseradish sour cream and a sprinkle of parsley.

Note: Jarred beets may be used; less sodium than canned and no prep except for cubing.

**Nutrition facts:** 1 cup 160 calories; 2.1 g saturated fat; 8 mg cholesterol; 591 mg sodium; 490 mg potassium; 17.1 g carbohydrates; 2.4 g fiber; 7g sugar; 3.7 g protein; 159 IU vitamin A; 13 mg vitamin C; 61 mcg Folate; 41 mg Calcium; 1 mg Iron; 21 mg Magnesium; ½ Starch

Exchange: 1 Vegetable, 2 Fat



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Lesson Presentations, created by K. Bentz UF/IFAS Extension Service Martin, April 2020

### References

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