

Tips for Carrots and Parsnips



During the project, we have tried some interesting experiments. This one was aimed at reducing the need to water the seeds in the early stages of planting. We have noticed that in our area, Spring can actually be quite dry, so we were looking for a way to stop these shallow-planted seeds from drying out until they had sprouted. We were also looking to plant in soil that has had quite a lot of rough and twiggy municipal compost added to it, and didn't want our roots to end up looking like octopuses (octopii?). Here are the things we tried.



For our parsnips and carrots, we planted in a narrow v-profile trench a little deeper than the carrots we were trying to grow. The trenches were filled with sand. The idea here is that the main roots have a good, un-interrupted root run to develop a nice straight root. Planting into a compost mix is recommended by some, as it has more food value for the roots, but the sand is recommended by others, with the idea that the side-roots of the carrots and parsnips will push into the soil on either side of the trench and get food from there.

We watered the surface before planting. Then we planted the seed thinly to avoid having to thin the crop and added a shallow covering of sand.



Then we placed planks over the the seeds. This keeps the surface moist so we didn't need to water the crop again, despite it not raining for the next 4 weeks. We also sowed radishes in between the deeper roots, to use up the space, and then left everything for 3 weeks, when we started looking to see if the seeds were sprouting. Covered crops did much better than non-covered crops, and the roots were nice and straight, so we were pleased with the results.