



## Fact Sheet

### THE AMAZING VEGETABLES OF THE ROYAL

Canadian agriculture remains a key focus of The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair each and every year. To help promote locally grown goods, The Royal works with a host of local farmers who supply vegetables to feed the crowds and satisfy appetites at The Royal. Meanwhile, other farmers spend all year cultivating the perfect crop to compete at The Royal, in hopes to bring home the prized red ribbon. But just how do their gardens grow? Below are some interesting facts about the amazing lives of the veggies that are featured at The Royal, and that show up in our kitchens every day.



#### Eat your CARROTS

Planted in the spring, a carrot is a biennial plant – meaning it takes two years to complete its life cycle, from seed to seed. In the first year, the root of the carrot forms the part we eat; in the second year they produce flowers and seeds before dying. But carrots rarely last the full two years because they are harvested as soon as they are big enough to be sold for consumption.

#### *Fun Facts*

- Carrots were first domesticated in Afghanistan in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
- Carrots can be selectively bred to become a different colour – including purple, red or white.
- The most common carrot colour is orange because way back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch Royal family wanted a national vegetable made in their Royal colour – orange!
- Eating carrots does NOT result in improved vision. As yummy as these root veggies are, the belief that carrots improved vision was a rumor started during WWII. After the British developed radar technology to help shoot down their enemy at night, they wanted to keep it a secret. To explain their improved vision, the military began spreading the idea that their pilots followed a diet with a high intake of vegetables, specifically carrots, resulting in better vision and a greater ability to see at night – and the idea has stuck ever since. Carrots do contain a high amount of beta-carotene and Vitamin A, which are both good for the eyes (although not enough to actually improve your vision), so keep on eating this veggie, which also offers other health-related benefits.
- How big can a carrot grow? Come and check out the Giant Vegetable Competition at The Royal this year where the Feature Giant Vegetable is the longest carrot root!

(more)

### **An APPLE a day...**

Samuel de Champlain travelled from France and planted the first known apple trees in North America when he landed in Nova Scotia back in 1604. Since then, orchard apples have become Canada's most important fruit crop. Apples are self-incompatible; meaning they must cross-pollinate to develop fruit. Pollinators, such as honeybee hives, are commonly used to carry the pollen from tree to tree. Apple trees are also adapted to temperate zones and must have a dormant period of about 1,000 hours below 5°C.

#### ***Fun Facts***

- The Royal Apple Competition returns this year; in 2008, the competition received nearly 100 entries spanning from coast-to-coast.
- In 2008, more than an orchard full of apples was given away at The Royal!

### **No kissing with GARLIC**

In a colder climate, such as ours in Canada, garlic is planted in the fall before the ground freezes and harvested in late spring. There are two notable types of this potent little vegetable – hardneck and softneck, hardneck being more popular in cooler climates. Although China supplies most of our garlic needs, there are hundreds of garlic farmers across our country that supply farmers markets and specialty food shops with garlic and it tastes much better too!

#### ***Fun Fact***

- Unlike many other crops, pests do not attack garlic plants (vampires included). In fact, garlic is used in some mosquito repellants to ward off pesky critters.

### **Ruta – what? THE RUTABAGA**

The rutabaga is a root vegetable found growing throughout Canada. Sometimes confused with a turnip – rutabagas are distinguished by the upper portion of their stem, which forms a neck, something turnips don't have.

#### ***Fun Facts***

- Prior to pumpkins being readily available, rutabagas were hollowed out and carved like jack-o-lanterns.
- Last year at The Royal, a rutabaga broke the Guinness World Record weighing in at a scale-bending **77.8 lbs!** Could that record be broken this year? You'll have to come to The Royal to find out.

### **No more couch POTATO**

Atlantic Canada leads the way in production of the potato, a tasty, nutritious vegetable and a staple in Canadian diets. Tubers, which are formed at the end of the potato plant's underground branches, are replanted to produce a new potato plant.

#### ***Fun Fact***

- The potato – a staple in our diet that contributes to \$6.4 billion to Canada's economy, creates 33,000 rural jobs and comes in 4,300 varieties!

For more information visit [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org) – November 6-15, 2009

Materials and images can be downloaded for media use

#### **Media Contacts:**

**Tiffany Fisher**

Mansfield Communications  
(416) 599-0024 x 222  
[tiffany@mcipr.com](mailto:tiffany@mcipr.com)

**Kate Walsh**

Mansfield Communications  
(416) 599-0024 x 229  
[kate@mcipr.com](mailto:kate@mcipr.com)

### **Yellow mellow CANOLA**

Canola oil comes from the meal and seed of the Canadian-developed rapeseed plant. Rapeseed was first grown in Canada during WWII as a source of high-quality lubricant for marine engines. Rapeseed is adapted to the relatively short, cool growing season of the Prairies where the majority of the seed is grown. Canola oil is now used as a source of cooking oil, margarine, salad dressing and shortening.

#### ***Fun Fact***

- Today, other uses are being found for Canola. In 2008, The Royal was home to a canola-powered Jet Car that boasted speeds of up to 400 miles per hour!

### **THE BEET goes on**

The origin of beets stem far back into pre-historic times where they grew in the Mediterranean area and were originally used just for their leaves. Today, we eat beet roots as well. Beets are biennial plants that grow leaves the first year and flower and produce seed the second. To help them grow, beets store energy from the first growing season in their roots as sugar, and then draw upon this energy in the second year to flower and produce seed.

#### ***Fun Facts***

- Beets come in a variety of colours and you will be able to find both purple and golden beets as featured vegetables on menus in The Royal restaurants.
- Although sugar cane is the crop most often associated with the production of refined sugar, approximately one-quarter of the world's production actually comes from a variety of beets known as sugar beets.

### **BOK CHOY baby**

Bok Choy is just one type of Asian Vegetable grown in Canada. Others include Mustard Cabbage, Chinese Spinach and Chinese Broccoli. Native to the East, these vegetables are now being grown throughout Canada to meet the needs of those who have come here from other parts of the world.

#### ***Fun Fact***

- Ontario farmers produce more than 50 per cent of Canada's total Asian vegetables.

For more information visit [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org) – November 6-15, 2009

Materials and images can be downloaded for media use

#### **Media Contacts:**

**Tiffany Fisher**

Mansfield Communications  
(416) 599-0024 x 222  
[tiffany@mcipr.com](mailto:tiffany@mcipr.com)

**Kate Walsh**

Mansfield Communications  
(416) 599-0024 x 229  
[kate@mcipr.com](mailto:kate@mcipr.com)