

THE SKINNY ON CARROTS

CARROTS ARE A TYPE OF ROOT VEGETABLE CALLED A TAPROOT. THEY GROW DOWN INTO THE SOIL AND COME IN MANY SIZES AND SHAPES—AND EVERY ONE A GOLDMINE OF NUTRIENTS.

WHAT DID ONE SNOWMAN SAY TO THE OTHER SNOWMAN?
DO YOU SMELL CARROTS?

MEET RANDY SIHOTA, ROOT CROP VEGETABLE GROWER...

Our family farm, Canadian Farms Produce, is located in the picturesque Fraser Valley where we grow a variety of vegetables—from carrots to pumpkins. The sandier soils of the Fraser Valley are perfect for producing the most flavourful carrot that is the right length, bright orange and clean in appearance.

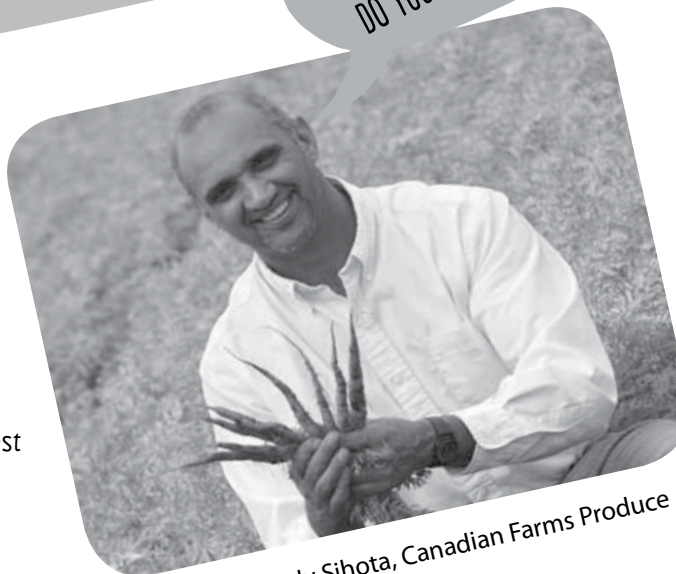
We grow carrots for 3 specific markets; baby peeled carrots, carrots for packaging and jumbo carrots for the food service industry. Our baby carrot varieties (Sweet-Bites and Sugar Snacks) are not actually 'babies' but cut and peeled mature carrots. These varieties are stars for their consistent orange colour, uniform length and sweeter flavor.

Do growers just plant seeds? That's just where we start. From mid-March to early July we use precision seeders to plant the tiny, black carrot seeds in rows in our fields. The seeds take 6 to 21 days to germinate and 70 to 100 days to mature fully. We harvest the ripe carrots with machinery which pulls them up by their tops, cuts the tops off, then drops them onto a conveyor leading to a truck. The carrots are then unloaded onto a line where they are hydro-cooled, graded and packaged. We distribute our produce daily from our warehouse and packing facility in Surrey. Why don't we just store them in the cool ground? Roots left in the ground too long become woody and are prone to cracking.

What's a problem unique to carrot growers?

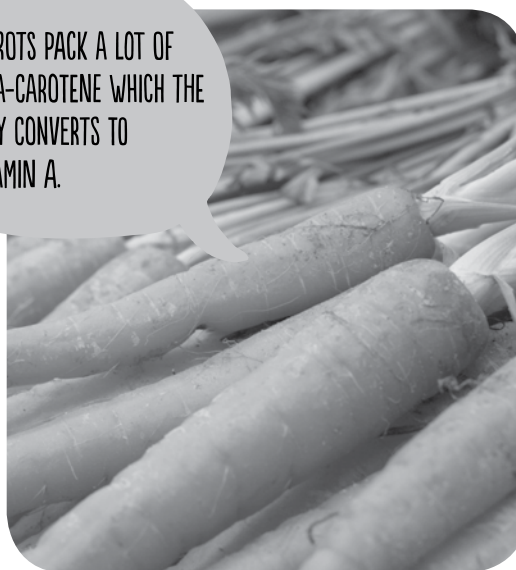
-feathered thieves. In spring, just as my carrots are coming up, I'll often look up at the sky and see migrating Canada Geese with beaks full of fresh carrot tops. Those fluffy green tops are a pretty tempting salad treat for wildlife so sometimes us farmers have to share.

For over 25 years, the Fraser Valley soil has given our family farm one of nature's gifts: the gift of abundant, great quality produce, just like the carrots you are snacking on today.



Randy Sihota, Canadian Farms Produce

CARROTS PACK A LOT OF BETA-CAROTENE WHICH THE BODY CONVERTS TO VITAMIN A.



The Double Scoop on
this Week's Snack!

Carrots



IF YOU CAN'T READ THE POEM BELOW THEN YOUR NOT EATING ENOUGH CARROTS!

LET'S LOOK AT HISTORY



Randy Sihota's farm is one of 32 Fraser Valley family farms that are members of the BCFresh Cooperative — an organization that helps them to market their produce. Many of these families have been farming in the Valley for generations. With good reason too. With its rich, fertile soil and abundance of sun and water, the Fraser Valley has always been a great provider. The first settlers in the Fraser Valley were the Sto:lo people. Residents now for over 10,000 years, they were the first hunters, fishers, gatherers and loggers making extensive use of the Fraser River and its tributaries. Many still do.

In 1808, Simon Fraser and his crew were the first Europeans to explore the Fraser River to its mouth. By 1827, the Hudson's Bay Company had established a fur trading post in the Fraser Valley at Fort Langley. They set up the first farm nearby to grow food for employees. Not only is Fort Langley the first settlement in the Vancouver area, it's also the first major agriculture center in BC.



THEY SAY THAT CARROTS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR EYES. THEY SWEAR THAT THEY IMPROVE YOUR SIGHT. BUT I'M SEEN' WORSE THAN I DID LAST NIGHT - YOU THINK MAYBE I AINT USIN' 'EM RIGHT?
© Shel Siverstein, Falling Up, 1996 Harper Collins

MAP IT OUT...

CARROTS AND OTHER ROOT VEGETABLES ARE GROWN COMMERCIALY IN THE **Lower mainland, Okanagan valley** AND ON **vancouver island** IN THE **saanich & Cowichan valleys**.

FIND THE LOCATION OF YOUR SCHOOL ON THE GROW BC MAP. ARE THERE ANY VEGETABLE GROWERS IN YOUR REGION?

FIND THE NORTHERN MOST POINT THAT CARROTS AND OTHER VEGETABLES ARE GROWN IN BOTH **mainland BC & vancouver island**.

STARTING AT **Langley** IN THE FRASER VALLEY, FOLLOW THE ROUTE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY EXPLORERS ALONG THE **Fraser River** AND ITS TRIBUTARIES. WHAT TYPE OF LANDFORMS DID THOSE EXPLORERS ENCOUNTER?

Think you know your BC history? Use lines to connect the date with the matching event...

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| 1970 | Simon Fraser starts an expedition to descend his now namesake Fraser River |
| 1938 | Terry Fox began his cross-country Marathon of Hope |
| 1948 | Lions Gate Bridge opens |
| 1858 | 1st television broadcast in BC received from Seattle |
| 1778 | Vancouver Canucks play their first game in the NHL in the Pacific Coliseum at Exhibition Park |
| 1808 | Captain James Cook of Great Britain is the first white man to set foot in BC |
| 1871 | Winter Olympic Games held in Vancouver |
| 1980 | Gold Rush on the Fraser brings over 25,000 prospectors seeking riches |
| 2010 | BC became the 6th Canadian province |