Not all carrots are orange

This is the VOA Special English Agriculture Report.

Carrots are grown on _____ and in family gardens throughout the world. Carrots are easy to raise and easy to harvest. They taste good. And they contain a lot of carotene, which the body makes into vitamin A.

When people think of carrots, they usually picture in their mind a vegetable that is long, thin and orange in color. But carrots come in many different _____ and shapes. And not all carrots are orange.

For example, Paris Market carrots are about five centimeters around. Imperator carrots are thin and about twenty-five centimeters long. And Belgian White carrots are, as their _____ suggests, white.

For the best results, carrots should be grown in sandy soil that does not hold _____ for a long time. The soil also should have no rocks.

To prepare your carrot garden, dig up the soil, loosen it and turn it over. Then, mix in some plant material or _____ fertilizer.

Weather, soil conditions and age will affect the way carrots taste. Experts say warm days, cool _____ and a medium soil temperature are the best conditions for growing carrots that taste great.

Carrots need _____ to develop their full sugar content. This gives them their taste. If they are harvested too early, they will not have enough sugar. But carrots lose their sweetness if you wait too long to pull them from the ground.

The best way to judge if a carrot is ready to be harvested is by its color. Usually, the _____ the color, the better the taste.

Most people do not know that carrots can be grown during the winter months. If the winter is not cold enough to freeze the ground, you can grow and harvest carrots the same way as during the _____ months.

If the ground does freeze in your part of the world, simply cover your carrot garden with a _____ layer of leaves or straw. This will prevent the ground from freezing. You can remove the ground cover and harvest the carrots as they are needed.

Carrots are prepared and eaten many different ways. They are cut in thin pieces and added to other vegetables. They are cooked by themselves or added to _____. Or, once they are washed, they are eaten just as they come out of the _____.

And that's the VOA Special English Agriculture Report. For more agricultural advice, along with transcripts and archives of our reports, go to voaspecialenglish.com. And our e-mail address is special@voanews.com. I'm Steve Ember.