

Winter Gardening Newsletter

by Linda Gilkeson

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Haul in the Carrots

This warmest winter on record continues to catch me by surprise. I usually advise digging any carrots and other roots remaining in the garden by the end of March or early April before they start to grow again, but given the way the weather is going, I think I might dig mine up this week.

Carrots become sweeter as they mature at the end of summer and concentrate the sugar in their roots with the cool nights in the fall. They start using up that sugar in the spring as the weather warms and the roots start to grow again. They also sprout weird hairy little roots along the length. As long as the flavour is good and they haven't sprouted side roots, you can leave roots out, but be aware that they could start deteriorating with this warm weather.

If the dug roots still have any leaves attached, remove them before you store them, as the leaves will continue to draw moisture out of the roots, hastening loss of quality. A refrigerator is best place to store roots to preserve root quality if you have the space. If you don't have room, store the roots in the coolest possible place you can find. Pack them in loosely closed plastic bags to keep in humidity or hold them in plastic tubs or bins with lids placed on loosely to allow some air exchange.

Other tasks this week:

If you want to start your own celery or celeriac (root celery), start seeds indoors by the end of the month. Also, as mentioned in previous messages, now is the time to start leeks and onions from seed indoors.

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For info on my books or to check my schedule for talks and presentations in your area see:

www.lindagilkeson.ca

You can read all of my previous messages on the Salt Spring Energy Strategy website:

www.saltspringenergystrategy.ca