

French Breakfast Radishes 101

There are over 100 radish varieties! French breakfast radishes differ from their American cousins in several ways. Instead of the usual cherry bell shape, these radishes grow in a 2-4-inch elongated form. The reddish-pink fruits have bright leafy greens. They are sweeter and have a much milder peppery taste.

Growing French breakfast radishes. They grow best in full sun to part shade in well-drained fertile soils. Sow seeds after all danger of frost has passed. Seeds can be sown every 7-10 days for a continuous harvest. They mature in just 28-30 days!



Note: don't let the name deceive you – the French do not eat these for breakfast but rather as a snack – raw, dipped in salt and served on a toasted, buttered baguette. YUM! The Germans eat them similarly, just add beer! Prost!

Harvesting - Green tops will be lush and leafy and the radishes will literally push their shoulders above the soil line when ready for harvest. Because they mature in just 28-30 days from germination, it is important to harvest them early. Their quick maturation rate makes them ideal for succession planting – sow seeds every 1-2 weeks. They tolerate cooler weather better so replanting in fall is another great idea.

Both the fruits and the leaves are edible. Fruits can be sliced in salads. The greens can be used raw in salads or cooked with other leafy greens.

- Radishes can be roasted whole or sliced and sautéed and served as a side dish.
- They are also delicious as part of a stir-fry or even added to a vegetable soup.
- Another great way to enjoy them is sliced raw as a dipper for guacamole.

Common Pests – French breakfast radishes have a natural resistance to pests. Their rapid growth and life cycle make them harvestable long before insects have a chance to settle in. That being said, here are some pests to watch out for.

- Spider mites – tiny spider-like creatures on the undersides of the leaves causing yellowing, browning and stippling. Another tell-tale sign is the presence of their fine spider-like webbing.
 - Use neem oil, insecticidal soap or introduce predatory mites to manage infestations.
- Aphids – small green, black or brown soft-bodied insects. Look for the presence of honeydew – their sticky secretions. Infestations cause stunted growth.
 - Use neem oil, insecticidal soap or introduce lady bugs to gain control.
- Whiteflies – small white, moth-like insects that fly when disturbed. Look for yellowing leaves and honeydew. They weaken the plants leading to a poor harvest.
 - Use yellow sticky traps.
- Mealybugs – white cottony masses on leaves and stems present as sticky leaves and sooty mold. Their infestation causes leaves to drop thereby decreasing fruit growth.
 - Apply rubbing alcohol to affected areas or introduce natural predators.
- Scale insects – small, oval shaped bugs that look like bumps on the leaves and stems. Yellowing foliage and sticky leaves are the tell-tale sign. Stunted growth and overall poor health signal their presence.
 - Horticultural oils and insecticides can be used. Always follow label instructions. Manual removal is also a possibility.
- Weevils – small beetles with long snouts whose larvae are found in the soil. Signs of damage are wilting and holes in the leaves caused by chewing.
 - Use beneficial nematodes and practice crop rotation to disrupt the life cycle.

Enjoy! Alaine Bush
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