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# Recommended varieties

American Purple Top, Thomson Laurentian and Joan

# **Interesting facts**

- Rutabaga belongs to the Cruciferae or mustard family and the genus *Brassica*, classified as *Brassica napobrassica*.
- Developed during the Middle Ages, rutabagas are thought to be a cross between the turnip and the cabbage.
- The rutabaga is an excellent source of vitamin C and potassium, and a good source for fiber, thiamin, vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, vitamin A and manganese.
- Similar to the turnip but sweeter, rutabagas are inexpensive and low in calories.

# Tips for buying, preparing and harvesting

• Look for smooth, firm vegetables with a round shape. Avoid rutabagas with punctures, deep cuts, cracks or signs of decay. They usually are trimmed of taproots and tops before they are sold to the public.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

# Using, Storing and Preserving



Rutabagas

Michigan-grown rutabagas are available late September through November.



- Use rutabagas in soups or stew, or bake, boil or steam and slice or mash as a side dish. Lightly stirfry or eat raw in salads. Rutabaga is traditional in Michigan pasties, along with potatoes, carrots and beef.
- Harvest when they reach the size of a softball. You may harvest rutabagas as they reach edible size and throughout the season since they will keep in the ground.

# Storage and food safety

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Rutabagas will keep for months in a cool storage place. They store well in plastic bags in a refrigerator or cold cellar.
- Keep rutabagas away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross contamination.
- Before peeling, wash rutabagas using cool or slightly warm water and a vegetable brush.

#### Lawn or garden questions?

Visit migarden.msu.edu. Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

### How to preserve

Preparation: Select young, medium-sized rutabagas. Cut off tops, wash using cool water and a vegetable brush, and peel.

#### Canning

Rutabagas are best frozen. Canned rutabagas usually discolor and develop a strong flavor.

#### Freezing

Freeze by cutting into cubes and water blanch for 3 minutes. Cool, drain and pack into freezer containers or freezer bags, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Label and place in a 0 °F freezer.

## **Recipes**

#### Baked rutabagas

Place 1 to 3 pounds quartered and peeled rutabagas in a shallow baking dish. Cover and bake in a 350 °F oven until tender, usually 40 to 50 minutes. Mix with carrots and parsnips for a great fall bake.

### **Sources**

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Find out more about Michigan Fresh at msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/mi\_fresh.



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