



THE PARSNIP

HERE are the main uses for the parsnip...

1 As mentioned above, the parsnip can be made to have a very high sugar content by exposing it to frost, making it a perfect candidate for not only wine, but also beer, syrup, and marmalade's.

2 The roots can be baked, boiled, pureed, steamed, and fried. It can also be eaten raw in a salad. The parsnip is also described as an excellent additional to any soup, ragout, or stew. In selecting the highest quality turnip, you first and foremost want to choose one that has been exposed to frost. This means that you will find the highest quality in the fall or winter markets as well as those available in March. Choose the parsnip that is firm and of medium size. An oversized parsnip is by no means an indication of quality, in fact, it very often means that the taste will be woody and the texture will be tough. It should have few blemishes on it. Parsnips are, however, very susceptible to canker on the shoulder of their root, which turns into rot later in its development. This effects the appearance more than the taste, but is an indication of poor health. A good rule of thumb when purchasing a parsnip is to follow the same basic guidelines you would when buying carrots or turnips.

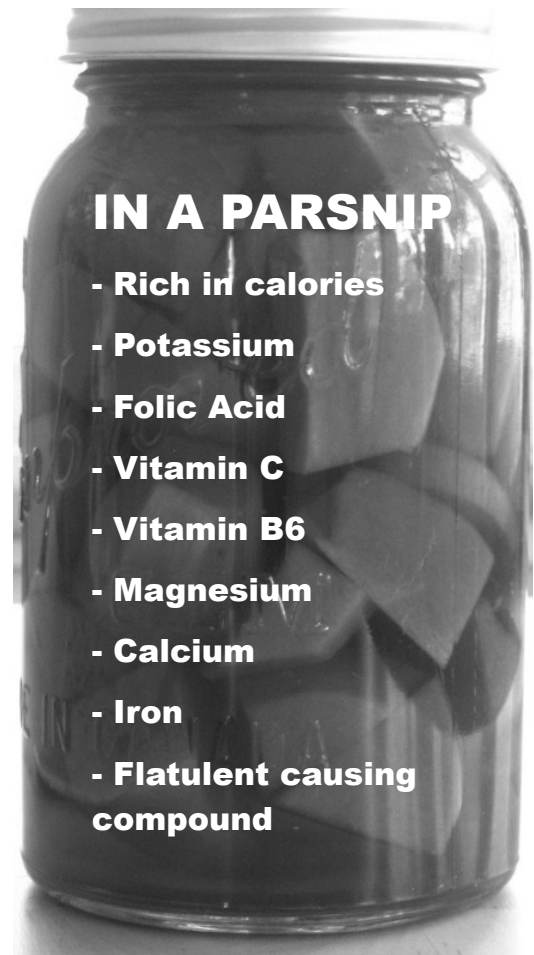
Parsnip: *Pastinaca sativa*

HISTORY

“Parsnips have had their admirers for over 2,000 years. The emperor Tiberius accepted part of Germany's annual tribute in the form of a shipment of parsnips. So sweet is the parsnip that at one time it was used as a source of sugar. Parsnip wine has long been made in England, its high sugar levels contributing to a beverage somewhat like sherry.” (*Botanica's Pocket Organic Gardening*)

CHARACTERISTICS

The parsnip is a root crop very closely related to the carrot. They share the same basic shape, although parsnips are generally paler in color and have a more distinct taste to them. They are planted in April or May, but must be left in the ground until the late fall or early winter in order to expose them to consecutive below freezing temperatures. This allows the starches to convert into sugar, giving the parsnip it unique, sweet nutty flavor.



IN A PARSNIP

- Rich in calories
- Potassium
- Folic Acid
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin B6
- Magnesium
- Calcium
- Iron
- Flatulent causing compound

PARSNIPS



***STORING:** If you are planning on purchasing parsnips from the store, then the way to store those on an individual basis is place them in the refrigerator. Stored properly, they should last around 2-4 weeks. If you have a surplus of parsnips, then the best way to store those is to leave them in the ground with a layer of insulation over the top, clamp them as you would potatoes, or store them in a box packaged with damp peat moss in a location that is consistently cool.

***FREEZING:** The parsnip does freeze fairly well. If you are going to freeze them whole, blanch them for 5 minutes and blanch them for 3 minutes if you are going to freeze them in cubes. Leave a little extra space in the freezer bags to allow for them to expand. They should last around a year in their frozen state.

***CANNING:** Like other root crops, there are very few recipes or recommendations for canning parsnips, but there is always room for experimentation.



Parsnip wine

*4lb parsnips
3lb sugar
1 gallon of water
some lemons or citric acid
yeast*

From *The Self Sufficient Life*, “Cut the parsnips up and boil them without letting them get too soft. They should just be easily prickable with a fork. Boil a couple of lemons up with them if you have them. Strain off the liquor, and while it is still hot, stir in the sugar, so that it dissolves. Put in some lemon juice or citric acid, and some raisins if you like. The purpose of the lemon juice or citric acid is to give the yeast enough acidity to feed on, since parsnips are low in acid. Put everything in a vessel, wait until the temperature drops to blood heat, then add your yeast and allow to ferment. Like all other wine, ferment under a fermentation lock, or a wad of cotton. Rack it well a couple of times, and then let it age.”

Butter Fried Parsnips

*6 parsnips, peeled and quartered lengthwise
¼ cup all purpose flour for coating
½ teaspoon seasoning salt
½ cup butter melted*

In a large saucepan cover parsnips with water, cover and boil over medium high heat until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. In a plastic bag combine flour and seasoning salt. Dip parsnips in butter and place them in the bag. Shake bag to coat parsnips with the seasoned flour. Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the butter starts to sizzle, add parsnips. Cook, turning occasionally, until all sides are golden brown. This recipe works just as well for turnips or potatoes. Serve hot off the griddle.