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recorded in 1620, in Sweden, where it was very popular, thus giving it the names 'Swedish turnip' and 'swede.' It was gradually introduced throughout Europe and North America during the 1700s and 1800s, and adopted readily in Canada because it is well suited to cool northern climates.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, rutabagas were an important livestock feed, often substituted for turnips. Only dairy farmers continued to use the traditional mangel-wurtzel sugar beets, which were said to produce better milk. Also, most people ate turnips during the winter, because they could be easily stored in cellars or in the ground. By the mid-twentieth century, soy and corn had replaced roots as a primary feed. As fresh imported vegetables displaced stored roots, and root cellars themselves became things of the past, Canadians all but stopped eating turnips and rutabagas.

There are about twenty-five varieties of turnips and rutabagas available in Canada. As you might expect, there are not a lot of new varieties, because there is little profit motive for turnip breeders these days.

Other Canadian root crops are fairly minor but interesting: salsify, Jerusalem artichoke, even peanuts. Others, of course, are anything but minor: potatoes, onions and garlic, for instance. Keep reading this magazine, and we'll write about those another time.

## Sources:

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## Root crops in Canada today

### Beets

Canada grows enough beets to fulfill almost all domestic demand, fresh and processed: a total last year of 21,260 tonnes of beets, with a farm gate value of \$7,430,000. Most production is in Ontario and Quebec. Canada also produces over 1.2 million tonnes of sugar beets (which make over 150,000 tonnes of sugar!), an amount that has nearly doubled since 2001. About three-quarters of Canada's sugar beet production is in Alberta.

### Carrots

Three-quarters of all carrots sold fresh and almost all carrots processed are grown domestically. Most production is in Ontario and Quebec. In 2007, the country produced a total of 305,544 tonnes of carrots, with a farm gate value of \$68,010,000.

### Parsnips

Parsnips make up only 0.1% of fresh fruit and vegetable sales in Canada, and Canadians grow almost all of the parsnips they eat. Although Ontario produces the most parsnips, they are also produced in British Columbia, Manitoba and the Atlantic Provinces. In 2007, the total Canadian production of parsnips was 3500 tonnes, with a farm gate value of \$2,645,000.

### Radishes

About two-thirds of the radishes eaten in Canada are grown domestically. A small amount of those are greenhouse-grown during the winter. The total production of radishes in Canada last year came to 8440 tonnes, with a farm gate value of \$9,150,000.

### Turnips and Rutabaga

Turnips and rutabagas are grown in all farming regions of Canada. Last year, 53,000 tonnes of turnips (counted together with rutabagas) were produced in Canada, with a farm gate value of \$18,415,000.

—Statistics Canada, *Fruit and Vegetable Production*, February 2008.