Beets

Beet Plant

Radish Plant

Leaf

Petiole
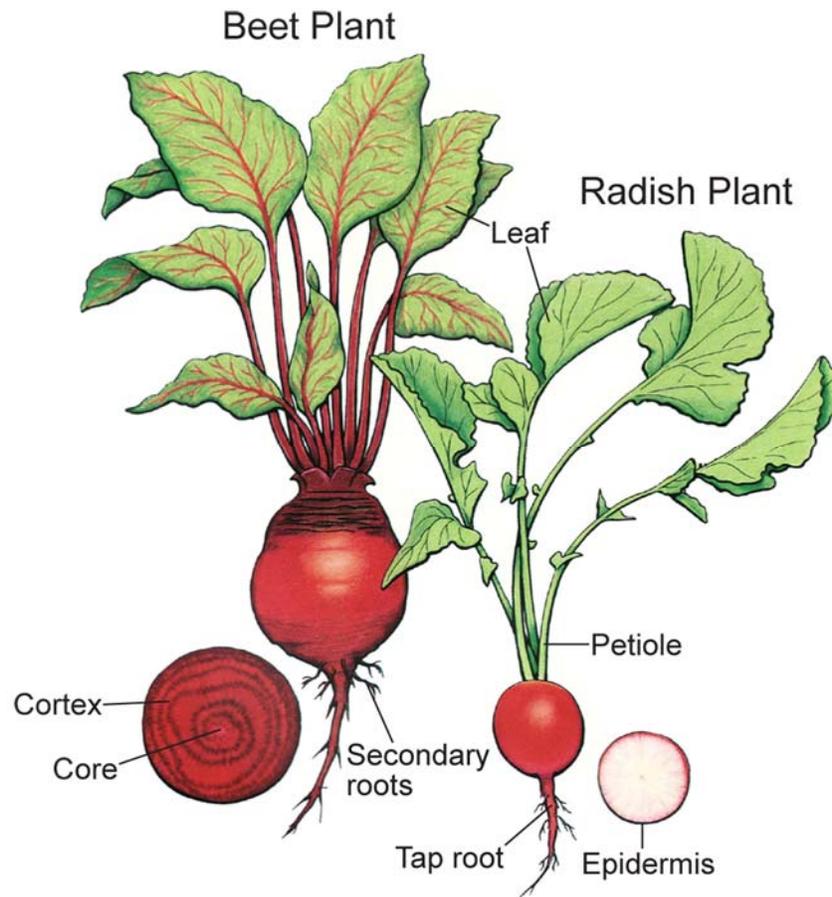
Cortex

Core

Secondary roots

Tap root

Epidermis

Source: *Buried Treasure: Roots & Tubers – Plant Parts We Eat,* Meredith Sayles Hughes and Tom Hughes, Lerner Books, 1998, page 70.

How Do Beets Grow?

Beets are a cool-season, herbaceous plant, grown either as an annual or biennial crop. Beets are annual as cultivated, but biennial if the roots are left in the ground over winter. Most varieties are frost-hardy, but cannot endure extreme heat. In California, the first plantings occur in March and continue until late June.

Beets prefer deep, well-drained soils such as sandy, silt, or clay loam. They have a large root system that extends down to three feet or more. Beets with the thickest stems have the biggest roots. Depending on use, they are generally picked in 40 to 60 days (small, table beets), 60 to 70 days (round, cooking beets), or 70 to 80 days (processing beets) after planting.

Growing beets adds minerals to the soil, as the leaves are made up of 25% magnesium, which is great for compost piles. Beets do well when planted with onions, cooking greens (kohlrabi), radishes, turnips, and garlic. If possible, plant beets where legumes previously grew (except runner or pole beans) because the soil is rich in nitrogen that beets need to grow. When grown together, pole beans and beets stunt each other's growth.

Temperature	50-64 degrees Fahrenheit
Soil	Sandy loam or well-drained clay loam; pH 6.0-6.8
Sunlight	Full sun or light shade
Planting	½-inch deep, spaced 1-2 inches apart; about 12-18 inches between rows
Irrigation	12-14 inches of water throughout harvesting; water more at beginning
Seed germination	Five days at soil temperature 77-86 degrees Fahrenheit
Days to maturity	40-60 days for small, table beets; 60 to 70 days for round, cooking beets; 70-80 days for processing beets
Harvesting	Mechanical
Plant with	Onions, kohlrabi, radishes, turnips
Avoid planting with	Pole beans

For more information, visit:
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/easygardening/beets/beets.html
www.anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8096.pdf