

Beets were used by the ancient Romans as an aphrodisiac. In fact, the nitrates in beets increase blood flow, and they contain high amounts of boron, which aids in the production of human sex hormones.

Sliced pickled beets are often served on burgers in Australia.

Beet leaves were used by Hippocrates to bind and dress wounds.

"The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious."

—Tom Robbins, *Jitterbug Perfume*

Can't be Beet

Beet juice can be used to determine the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. The juice turns pink in an acid solution, and yellow in an alkaline solution.

Bumper beet crop? Make beet chips! Thinly slice beets using a mandoline. Toss with olive oil, place on a non-stick baking sheet, and put in the oven immediately. Bake at 300°F for about 20 minutes, then reduce to 225°F and bake for about an hour. Remove from the oven just as they begin to brown to avoid overcooking. Toss with sea salt and serve.

Beets are said to have grown in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Tractor tires are often filled with liquid to increase traction and allow them to pull heavier loads. Beet juice is commonly used, as it weighs about 30% more than water, and resists freezing to about -37°C.

Beet juice is also added to rock salt for de-icing roads—it can melt to lower temperatures, and its stickiness helps keep the salt on the road.

The world's largest beet was grown in 2005 in the Netherlands. It weighed nearly 157 pounds.

