

Home Gardening Series

Chicory

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Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny
Soil – well-drained loam
Fertility – medium
pH – 5.8 to 6.5
Temperature – cool
Moisture – moist

Culture

Planting – seeds early spring
Spacing – 9 x 24 inches
Hardiness – hardy
Fertilizer – medium

Chicory – *Cichorium intybus*

Chicory is an unusual plant. Although chicory has been cultivated for over 1,000 years, it is still very wild looking and shows but slight effects of its association with man. A type of chicory is commonly seen as a weed in the United States and is originally a native of Europe.

Chicory is a hardy vegetable that is used in three basic forms. The roots are dried, roasted and prepared as a coffee substitute or coffee blend. The slightly bitter, curled, dandelion-like greens cicoria (called Italian Dandelion) are grown and used as potherbs. Witloof chicory (also called French endive) is forced as a blanched, tender, fresh salad delicacy. It is sold in some produce markets at high prices.



Cultural Practices

Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep (12 to 15 seeds per foot of row). Allow 18 to 24 inches between rows. When the seedlings are 2 to 3 inches high, thin to 9 to 12 inches apart for chicory roots and greens and 3 to 4 inches apart for witloof. Plant in May for greens and roots and about 120 days before frost for production of roots for forcing.

Greens – Young, tender leaves can be harvested for greens in 60 to 70 days when they are 6 to 8 inches long. Chicory may be blanched by tying the outermost leaves in the same manner as endive and escarole.

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Chicory Cultivars -

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Seed Per 100 Feet of Row	Remarks
Catalogna/Cut Leaf Type	Catalogna Special	40	1/16 ounce	Italian dandelion. Can be harvested "baby size" three to four weeks after transplanting or left to grow into heavy, tall bunches. Long, deep green, slender, deeply cut leaves.
	Magdefurgh	100	1/16 ounce	Italian dandelion. Medium green, tender, dandelion-like foliage. Excellent in salads or leaves can be cooked like spinach. Roots are tapered and white. Dried, ground up roots can be used as a coffee addition or substitute.
	San Pasquale	70	1/16 ounce	Broader, more deeply cut leaves than Italian dandelion. Large yields.
	Red Rib	55	1/16 ounce	Harvest 35 days for "baby leaf." Bright red stem and midvein with a dark green leaf.
Radicchio	Chioggia	60	1/16 ounce	For spring and summer planting. Compact plant with brilliant garnet-colored, white-ribbed head. Resistant to bolting.
	Indigo	65	1/16 ounce	Crimson heads, white veins, spring, summer and fall plantings.

Chicory Root – Chicory root is grown as a long-season annual. Most commercial production is in Michigan, but chicory root is easily grown under Arkansas conditions. Dig roots in the late fall before they are frozen in the garden. The roots will be 5 to 7 inches in diameter at the crown and tapered into a taproot. The usable root will be 9 to 10 inches long. The roots are scrubbed to remove garden soil, cubed and roasted for grinding.

jagged-edged leaves of the weed *Taraxacum officinale* that grows both wild and cultivated. Because the leaves are similar, the Italian green "cicoria" was translated "Italian dandelion." They are members of the same family, but the similarity is mainly in the appearance of the leaves. Italian dandelion belongs to the genus *Cichorium* and will not become a weed problem in your lawn.

Frequently Asked Question

Q. Why are Italian dandelions grouped with chicory and not the wild plant dandelion?

A. The name dandelion comes from French *dent de lion*, meaning "lion's tooth," a reference to the