

Endive, Escarole, Chicory

Cichorium endivia is a member of the Asteraceae (sunflower) family. Varieties include Green Curled Ruffec (endive), Broadleaf Batavian (escarole), and Full Heart Batavian (escarole).

Endive is a loose-headed plant with narrow, curling leaves. The broadleaf type is called escarole. Full Heart Batavian is the main variety of escarole on the market. At harvest, the rosette of leaves makes up most of the plant. It is 12 to 15 inches across with upright to spreading growth and deep green leaves.

Market Information

Current production and yield. Florida is the leading U.S. producer of endive and escarole. Other producing states include California, New Jersey, Ohio, and New York. Supplies are available year-round, and peak from December through April.

Use. The leaves of endive and escarole are used as salad and cooked greens. A 2-cup portion of either of these vegetables contains about 2,050 IU of Vitamin A, 6.5 milligrams of Vitamin C, 1.25 grams of protein, and 52 milligrams of calcium.

Culture

Climatic requirements. Endive and escarole are hardy plants but do poorly in hot weather and are damaged by severe frosts. Seed them to mature before hot weather arrives. Escarole is the more cold-tolerant of the two. Both plants thrive best as early spring or late fall crops. The plants bolt in hot weather.

Propagation and care. Endive is similar to lettuce in its soil and climatic requirements. Plant 1 foot apart in rows spaced 1½ or 2 feet apart. Blanching the head for two weeks will reduce bitterness. To



Green Curled Ruffec, an endive variety.
(Photo: Hunter Johnson)

blanch, tie the head like cauliflower or stand boards on each side of the row. Tie the leaves together only when they are dry, since wet foliage during blanching will decay. Blanching is not a common practice among commercial growers.

Harvest and postharvest practices. The USDA recommends storing at 32°F with 95 to 100% relative humidity. The approximate storage life is 2 to 3 weeks.

Sources

Seed

W. Atlee Burpee & Co., 300 Park Avenue, Warminster, PA 18974

The Cook's Garden, P.O. Box 65, Londonderry, VT 05148

Johnny's Selected Seeds, Foss Hill Road, Albion, ME 04910

Le Jardin du Gourmet, P.O. Box 75, St. Johnsbury Center, VT 05863

Nichols Garden Nursery, 1190 North Pacific Highway, Albany, OR 97321

Park Seed Co., Cokesbury Road, Greenwood, SC 29647-0001

Seeds Blüm, Idaho City Stage, Boise, ID 83706

Shepherd's Garden Seeds, Shipping Office, 30 Irene Street, Torrington, CT 06790

Taylor's Herb Gardens, 1525 Lone Oak Road, Vista, CA 92084

More information

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United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association. 1964. *Endive-escarole-chicory. Fruit & Vegetable Facts & Pointers*. September 1964.

USDA. 1984. *Composition of foods: Vegetables and vegetable products*. Agric. Handb. 8-11. USDA, Washington, DC

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