Chicory

Cichorium intybus



Chicory foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 18 inches

Flower Height: 5 feet

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Radicchio, Succory, Witloof

Description:

A bushy perennial herb producing blue or lavender flowers, or rarely, pink or white, on tall panicles above the rich green foliage; must have full sun and prefers moist soil; used as a culinary herb; the leaves are used in salads

Edible Qualities

Chicory is a perennial herb that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces creamy white roots with white flesh which are harvested from late spring to early fall. The roots have an earthy taste.

The roots are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Tea

Features & Attributes

Chicory has masses of beautiful panicles of blue daisy flowers with lavender overtones rising above the foliage from late spring to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its serrated narrow leaves remain green in colour throughout the season.

This is an herbaceous perennial herb with tall flower stalks held atop a low mound of foliage. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It is a good choice for attracting bees and butterflies to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Chicory is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

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- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Chicory will grow to be about 18 inches tall at maturity extending to 5 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant is typically grown in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.

Chicory is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.