

How to Grow Endive and radicchio

General

The chicory family includes the food plants endive and radicchio, which range in flavour from bitter to sweet. All varieties become sweeter, and lose much of their bitterness, when cooked. Try a hot oil salad dressing over endive, or a barbecued head of radicchio!

Latin

Cichorium endiva (endive) & *C. intybus* (radicchio)

Family: Asteraceae

Difficulty

Endive is easy.

Radicchio is moderately difficult.

We Recommend: Palla Rossa. If you are unfamiliar with radicchio, the time has come to try it! Those of us who know it love it, and look forward to the harvest time in summer and fall. Pan Di Zucchero is an unusual endive that is very easy to grow, and absolutely delicious.

Season & Zone

Season: Cool season

Exposure: Full-sun

Zone: 4-10

Timing

Sow in April and again in early July to mid-August to take advantage of the fall growing season. Optimal soil temperature: 10-22°C (50-72°F). Seeds sprout in 2-15 days, depending on conditions. In hot weather plants will go to seed quickly, so have new plantings ready to go.

Starting

Either direct seed or start indoors and transplant. Sow seeds 5mm (¼") deep, and thin or transplant to allow 30-45cm (12-18") between plants in rows 30-45cm (12-18") apart.

Growing

Ideal pH: 6.0-6.5. Enrich soil with compost and add ¼ cup complete organic fertilizer into the soil beneath each transplant. Rapid, continuous growth is essential for good yields and high quality. Regular watering is essential.

Fall plantings can be protected from rain by putting a cloche over them. Endive heads can be blanched to reduce bitterness by placing a cardboard or plastic disc on top. Radicchio requires a good supply of phosphorus and potassium, but will not head and may bolt if there is too much nitrogen available. Days to maturity shown are from date of direct sowing. If transplanting, subtract 10-15 days.

Harvest

Use as a cut and come again crop or let the heads develop and cut at ground level. Many will grow back.

Seed Info

Usual seed life: 3 years.

Diseases & Pests

Aphids - Water can be used to remove aphids from plants. Wash the plant off with water occasionally as needed early in the day.

Moulds and rot from heavy rains can be prevented by growing under cover. Tip burn is a calcium deficiency within the plant that can be caused by an imbalance with over nutrients. Make sure you have limed the soil, do not over-fertilize and harvest just before full maturity to avoid it.



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Radicchio di Treviso



Italian Dandelion