

Home Gardening Series
Endive-Escarole

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Vegetables

Environment

Light – sunny
Soil – well-drained loam
Fertility – medium-rich
pH – 5.5 to 7.0
Temperature – cool season
Moisture – moist

Culture

Planting – seed 2 to 4 inches apart
and thin
Spacing – 12 inches apart, 24 inches
between rows
Hardiness – hardy annual
Fertilizer – medium

**Endive-Escarole –
Cichorium endivia –
Annual**

Endive and escarole are common in the Mediterranean and Greek islands. They are related hardy annual vegetables that have the same growing requirements. The primary difference between them is that endive has curled, finely cut leaves, while escarole has broad, flat leaves. They are cool-season plants that grow well in the spring and better in the fall. Although endive is produced in Florida, it is produced as a winter vegetable. Endive and escarole are



delicacies when blanched and used for salads or as a garnish.

Cultural Practices

Planting Time

Endive and escarole do not thrive under hot conditions. They must be grown as an early spring or fall crop. They grow in much the same manner as lettuce, responding well to fertile soil, mean growing temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees F and a uniform supply of moisture.



Spacing and Depth of Planting

Plants may be started inside in late February and transplanted into the garden in early April. Plant seed 1/4 inch deep in a container of sterile soil mix. When the seedlings are less than 1 inch high, they may be spaced 1 1/2 to 2 inches apart in a flat. The seedlings are ready to plant in the garden when they are 2 1/2 to 3 inches high. Use a starter fertilizer solution to establish a fast start and a mature plant before summer heat.

Seed may be planted directly in the garden in mid-March to early April. Plant seed 1/4 inch deep in rows 18 to 24 inches apart. When the seedlings are 1 inch high, they should be thinned or transplanted to 9 to

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Cultivars

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Seed Per 100 Feet of Row	Disease Resistance or Tolerance	Remarks
Endive-Escarole	Full Heart Batavian	85	1/4 oz		Upright, broad outer leaves, smooth, closely bunched center leaves, creamy yellow.
	Green Curled	95	1/4 oz		Dark, finely cut and curled, fringed leaves, green, fleshy mid-ribs.
	Salad King	98	1/4 oz		Dark green, white-ribbed leaves, tolerant to hot weather and frost.
	Broad Leaved Batavian	90	1/4 oz		Large, broad, slightly twisted lettuce-like leaves; 16-inch diameter. Deep, blanched heart; buttery texture.
	Indigo	65	1/4 oz	Tip Burn Bottom Rot (tolerant)	Round Chioggia type; good radicchio for hot or cool weather. Firm, medium-large burgundy heads.
	Red Treviso	92	1/4 oz		The standard upright red radicchio. Best as a fall crop. Italian heirloom.

12 inches apart. Water frequently during the hot summer months. Endive is very hardy and will withstand frost to give harvest through early winter.

Care

Unless blanched, the spreading plants are likely to be bitter. When sunlight is kept from the center leaves, their green color is reduced, bitterness is decreased and texture and flavor are improved. Heads are usually blanched after the leaves spread sufficiently to touch the next plant. Tie the tops of outermost leaves together as the head develops. Make

sure the plants are dry before tying the leaves. If the plant is not dry, the inner leaves may rot. Blanching requires two to three weeks, and several plants may be blanched at one time.

Harvesting

After the blanched heads have developed, cut the plants at ground level. If the weather turns very hot in the summer or a hard freeze is expected in the winter, cut the heads, wash, drip dry and store in a polyethylene bag in the refrigerator for later use. Discard the tough outer leaves.

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