

Did You Know?



Chicory, *Cichorium intybus*

- Common names for chicory include blue sailors, coffeeweed, succory, Italian dandelion, witloof chicory, Belgian endive, French endive.
- Chicory is a perennial in the Aster family with a long tap root and a blue flower.
- The tall flowering stems have blue flowers and produce dandelion-like seeds above low growing foliage.
- Ancient Egyptians grew chicory for medicinal use, a coffee substitute and vegetable crop.
- Traditional medicinal uses varied globally, from malaria treatment in Afghanistan, digestive disorders in Europe, wound healing in Turkey to jaundice in South Africa. The leaves, stem, root and flowers are all used for different preparations.
- The root has up to 40% inulin, which is a type of soluble fiber found in many plants. Chicory root is the main source of inulin used in dietary supplements. It is also used in high fiber, low fat and reduced calorie foods.
- Recent research supports the effectiveness of chicory root a prebiotic, and for improved digestive health and regularity, long term weight management, bone health, blood sugar management and improved metabolic status on blood lipids.
- The dried, roasted, and ground root has long been used as a coffee substitute or coffee extender.
- While ground chicory adds a robust flavor to coffee, it does not contain caffeine.
- Ground chicory has been added to stout beers while brewing for additional flavor.
- In New Orleans, the traditional café au lait is made with rich black coffee, chicory and boiled milk.
- Introduced from Europe, chicory has become naturalized throughout North America. It is listed as a noxious weed in Colorado.
- The cultivated varieties of chicory are grown as a leafy vegetable (radicchio, Belgian endive, and puntarelle) and are much less bitter than the wild chicory. There are also related species also grown as a leafy vegetable.
- Large-rooted cultivars such as ‘Brunswick’ and ‘Magdeburg’ are grown for root harvest.

Did You Know?



- The blanched leaves of endive are grown by harvesting the roots, cutting off the top and replanting to force new growth in a dark environment.