PLANT FACT SHEET

Cichorium endivia L.

GENUS *Cichorium* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Endive

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Vegetable

The leaves are eaten raw or cooked. They have a slightly bitter taste. They can be boiled, steamed or cooked in soups.
The broadleafed kinds are used in stews and the curled-leaf kinds are used in salads.

DESCRIPTION

An annual plant, or one which grows one year, then flowers the next. It grows 20-50 cm high and spreads 20-50 cm wide. The plant looks a lot like lettuce but the leaves are wrinkled near the edge. The leaves are single, broad and slightly toothed at the edge. The flower heads are greatly thickened and the outer flower bracts are almost equal in length. The outer bracts often have curved tips.

HABITAT

A warm temperate plant. Plants grow from sea level up to 2600 m altitude in the tropics. It needs a fertile soil and the soil needs to be well drained. It is more tolerant to heat, than lettuce. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. They are often transplanted. A spacing of 30 cm x 30 cm is suitable. Covering the plants for 2-3 weeks before harvesting, makes the leaves whiter, more tender and less bitter. It is possible to save seed. Plants which form a heart are covered with a cloth or pot to blanch them and reduce the bitterness.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants are ready about three months after transplanting.

NOTES

There are about 9 Cichorium species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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