PLANT FACT SHEET

Cichorium intybus L.

GENUS *Cichorium* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Chickory, Chicory

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Stems, Roots, Herb, Spice, Vegetable, Flowers

The leaves and plant are eaten raw or cooked. They are bitter. Young leaves are less bitter. They are used in soups.
The roots of some kinds are dried, roasted and powdered then added to coffee.
The flowers can be used in salads.
The large blanched heads are steamed or served raw.
A chewing gum is produced from the sap.

DESCRIPTION

A perennial herb up to 1 m high. It forms clumps. It has white, milky sap when parts are broken off. Kinds have been selected either for their fattened edible roots or for their edible leaves. The plant has a large taproot. The leaves are sword shaped and have teeth along the edge. The leaves form a cluster around the base of the plant. They can be 12 cm long. The leaves up the stem clasp the stem. The highest leaves are reduced to bracts. It has a bright blue, pink or white flowers on a branched stem. The flowers are dandelion-like. The flower heads can be 3.5 cm across. Several cultivated varieties have been produced.

HABITAT

A Mediterranean plant. It grows in the highlands in the tropics. In Java it grows above 1,000 m altitude. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. Tasmania Herbarium. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed are sown 15 mm apart, in rows 20 cm apart. Seedlings do not transplant easily. Young tender shoots are formed by stripping roots of their leaves then covering with soil. Roots the size of a parsnip are harvested. These are then planted upside down in trenches in sand and after a few weeks more soil is added to exclude all light. The chicons are ready to use in 9-12 weeks.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Roasted chicory is made by digging up the taproot washing them cutting and drying the root then roasting.

NOTES

There are about 9 Cichorium species. Tubers are rich in inulin and sugar.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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