



JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES or SUNCHOKES (*Helianthus tuberosus*)

Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers as soon as you receive them for the best results. If you cannot plant immediately, store in a cool, dark place with a temperature of 34°F/1°C, such as a refrigerator vegetable crisper or in a bucket of damp soil in a basement. Do not allow to dry out prior to planting.

A perennial sunflower grown for its tender potato-like tubers, Jerusalem artichokes are enjoyed raw or cooked for their sweet nutty flavor. The tall, 6–8 foot, plants also make an attractive windbreak, with masses of attractive, 2–4 inch daisy-like flowers that can be used in arrangements as cut flowers.

LIFE CYCLE:

Jerusalem artichokes are a perennial in Zones 3–8. It is not recommended to plant in a Zone higher than Zone 8, as Jerusalem artichokes are best suited to cooler climates.

SITE SELECTION:

Choose a permanent location to plant Jerusalem artichokes as they are very hardy and may be difficult to eliminate once established. Plants grow best in light or sandy soil. They will grow in clay soil if it has plenty of organic matter, and can be grown in practically any climate, especially in cooler climates.

SOIL PREPARATION:

Till the soil well. Make sure it is free of perennial weeds and grasses. Add compost or manure. Ordinary vegetable garden fertility is adequate.

PROPAGATION:

Break or cut tubers into 1–2 eye pieces, approximately 1–2 ounces each (about 1½ inches in diameter). Plant the pieces about 4 inches deep, 12–18 inches apart, in rows 18–36 inches apart.

WEEDS, PESTS, AND DISEASE:

Keep the soil weed-free with shallow cultivation or by mulching heavily after the plants emerge. Insect pests and disease are not generally a problem. Rodents may burrow underground to eat the tubers, especially in the winter.

HARVESTING:

Tubers may be harvested from late summer through late fall. It is best to harvest tubers after several frosts as this improves their flavor. Grasp the plant at the base of the stalk, pull up the whole plant, and gather the tubers. Alternatively, the tubers may be left in the ground and harvested in smaller quantities as desired.

REPLANTING:

The next crop can be planted from harvested tubers in fall or by leaving some in the ground to grow again.

WINTER PROTECTION:

Jerusalem artichokes are cold hardy to Zone 3. Mulching is only necessary where cold is severe.

STORING:

For tubers harvested for consumption, Jerusalem artichokes may be frozen, refrigerated in perforated plastic bags, or stored in a root cellar (washed or unwashed) in perforated plastic bags or slightly vented containers. Keep tubers damp to prevent shriveling, but not wet as they may become susceptible to rot. Optimum storage conditions are 31–32°F/-1–0°C at 90–95% relative humidity.

Nutritional Note:

Directly after harvest, the carbohydrates in Jerusalem artichoke tubers are in the form of inulin and are good for dieters and diabetics. The inulin changes gradually in storage to other starches and should then be regarded more like a potato by diabetics.

REV 09/23/2016 RC