

How to Grow Endive Plants

Endive is closely related to Chickory. Endive is loose leafed, with a slight bunching of blanched leaves in the center of the plant. There are two types: the frilly curled Endive with pointy leaves, and a smoother-leafed Escarole. Endive has a slightly bitter, buttery taste. It is very popular, and attractive in salads.

Days to Maturity: Endive is ready to harvest in 90-100 days.

Sowing Endive Seeds: Endive seeds are small and very fine. When planting in rows, spread the seeds as thinly as possible. Cover the seeds with a very fine layer of loose soil or starting mixture. Water lightly, and keep soil moist. Make sure to thin plants to 6" apart, in rows 18" apart.

Tip: Some people sprinkle the seeds on top of a fine soil, and just water them in.

Endives are good candidates for container gardens. Try growing Endive in a container on your patio or deck.

How to Grow Endive: Endive likes cool weather and lots of moisture, in rich, well drained soil. Provide an even amount of moisture and fertilizer. Liquid fertilizer works well.

Weed the patch regularly, as weeds will compete for moisture and nutrients.

Harvesting: Endive grows slower than most lettuces. You can harvest leaves as soon as it is big enough to use. Like other lettuce, Endive thrives in cooler weather, with moderate moisture. It is not fond of mid-summer heat, or dry conditions.

Insects and Pests: Bunnies like all kinds of lettuce. Got bunnies!? Then, a rabbit fence is in your future.

A variety of insects can pose a real problem. Lettuce is delicate and can absorb many insecticides. If you want or need to use insecticides, look for brands that are less harmful to you and the environment. We like to avoid insecticides on leafy vegetables wherever possible. we suggest organic sprays, and a willingness to give up some of the harvest to insects, versus using pesticides. After all, one of the reasons most of us have gardens is to avoid the pesticides.

Slugs are a real problem for all types of lettuces. There are a variety of control methods.

Disease: Disease problems are few, except in wet or hot weather.