

Artichoke



Artichoke Overview

- Member of the Thistle family
- Cultivated and enjoyed since the time of the Romans
- Both a nutritious vegetable and a beautiful landscape plant
- Can reach 3 feet in height and width
- Flower, if allowed to bloom, can be 7 inches in diameter

Artichoke – Soil Preparation

- Produce best in deep, fertile, well-drained soils
- Plant's deep roots need relatively deep soils with adequate volume for root development
- Sandy soils with excessive drainage should be avoided
- Soil with a high salt content will reduce their growth and yield

Artichoke - Varieties

- Varieties for Texas
 - Green Globe (standard variety)
 - Imperial Star
 - Harmony
 - Emerald
 - Grand Beurre
 - Talpiot
 - Purple Sicilian

Artichoke – Seed Preparation

- Plan before fall planting – it can take up to 60 days before plants are of suitable size to plant outside
- Transplant in mid-October, which means seeds must be started in mid-August
- Plant seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep in potting mix when the temperature doesn't exceed 85 degrees
- Start seeds in a greenhouse, in a shady spot outside in late summer, or indoors under a grow light

Artichoke - Fertilization

- Grow well when fertilized regularly
- Soil test will tell you what needs to be added to the soil
- Without a soil test
 - Apply about 0.25 pounds P and 0.25 pounds K per 100 square feet before planting
 - Apply about 0.1 pounds N per 100 square feet before planting and 0.3 pounds per 100 square feet 6 to 8 weeks later
 - Foliar application of liquid fertilizer containing Ca and Zn every 2 weeks during active growth in early spring

Artichoke - Planting

- Transplant seedlings 2 ½ to 3 feet apart in rows 3 to 4 feet apart
- Transplant grow slowly in the fall and winter, but rapidly grow in early spring
- Plant in well-drained soil and mulch well to help reduce weeds and conserve soil moisture

Artichoke – Care During Season

- Do not expose to temperature below 25 degrees
- If threat of frost, cover plants with a 6-inch layer of straw mulch, leaves, or some other form of protection
- Hot, dry climate causes artichoke buds to open quickly and destroy tenderness of the edible parts
- Irrigation will help keep temperatures down

Artichoke - Watering

- Deep rooted plants that require adequate moisture when growing and producing fruit
- Moisture stress may result in black tip, which is only cosmetic damage because the edible portion of the bud is not affected
- Black tip is most common when conditions are sunny, warm, and windy

Artichoke - Diseases

- Leave plenty of space between plants to reduce disease problems
- Are susceptible to root rot, so do not soil become too wet
- Common diseases:
 - Powdery mildew
 - Verticillium wilt
 - Botrytis rot
 - Curly dwarf virus
 - Bacterial crown rot

Artichoke - Insects



Plume Moth



Aphid



Cribrate Weevil Larvae



Spider Mites

Artichoke - Weeds

- Mulching will reduce weeds and conserve soil moisture
- Remove weeds when artichokes are small to reduce competition
- Large, fully developed artichoke plants compete well with weeds

Artichoke - Harvesting

- Healthy plant should produce 6 to 9 buds per plant
- Main harvest usually occurs in April and May
- Harvest by cutting the stem 2 to 3 inches below the base of the bud
- Remove old stems as soon as all buds have been harvested to allow new stems to grow

Artichoke - Serving

- Great source of fiber
- Steamed, boiled or microwaved
- Edible parts include the flesh of the base of the leaves and the heart of the flower
- Rinse leaves and cut off the sharp tips, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, before cooking

Artichoke - Cleanup

- Perennial plant
- Cut plant back to soil level once the harvest is done in June
- Plant will send out shoots in the fall
- New shoots can be dug out to be replanted into a new location