

Home Gardening Series

# Jerusalem Artichoke

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Vegetables

## Environment

**Light** – sunny  
**Soil** – deep loam  
**Fertility** – medium-high  
**pH** – 5.8 to 7.0  
**Temperature** – warm  
**Moisture** – well-drained

## Culture

**Planting** – tubers 2 to 3 inches deep  
in spring  
**Spacing** – 2 x 3 feet  
**Hardiness** – tender  
**Fertilizer** – medium

## Jerusalem Artichoke – *Helianthus tuberosus* – perennial

Jerusalem artichoke (known as sun choke) is a true native of North America and was one of the few vegetables grown by the Indians. It is a perennial plant cultivated as an annual that may persist in the garden as a weed. An entirely different plant than the Globe artichoke grown in California, Jerusalem artichoke is related to the sunflower. The fleshy, oblong tubers may be baked, boiled or fried like white potatoes. They are also used as animal food, especially for hogs.

Jerusalem artichokes have gained attention in recent years because the tubers contain inulin that breaks down into sugar fructose when eaten. Fructose is reputed to be of value in the diets of people with diabetes.

## Cultural Practices

### Planting Time

Jerusalem artichokes grow well in all parts of Arkansas. They thrive best on a well-drained garden soil with high fertility, especially potassium. Plant entire tubers in early spring.

### Spacing and Depth of Planting

Plant individual tubers 2 to 3 inches deep spaced 24 to 30 inches apart. Since plants grow 6 feet high or higher, you should allow 3 to 4 feet between rows.

### Care

Early cultivation and hoeing are necessary. As the plants become established, however, little to no further care is required. The large, woody tops that resemble sunflowers should be cut off above the ground before harvesting.

### Harvesting

Dig tubers any time from September until spring but before new growth starts in the spring. The tubers are usually dug as needed. A supply can be harvested and stored as potatoes before the soil freezes. Any tubers not harvested will grow, become troublesome weeds and spread in the garden.

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## Cultivars

Variety	Days to Maturity	Tubers/ 100 Ft of Row	Sources (see "Sources" paragraph below)	Remarks
Jerusalem Artichoke	120	50-100	8, 23	Delicious tubers, dug from late fall to early spring. Great for naturalizing, but may become invasive.

## Sources

For a list of sources referred to by number, request FSA6106, *Seed Sources: Vegetable and Herb*, for current address, telephone and web site.

## Frequently Asked Question

### Q. What are the best storage conditions for Jerusalem artichoke?

- A. If possible, store at a temperature of 32 degrees F with high humidity (95 percent). Jerusalem artichokes do not form a thick skin like the potato and tend to lose moisture rapidly. The tubers can also be placed in polyethylene bags in the refrigerator.

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