



ARTICHOKE GROWING GUIDE

This cool season vegetable yields flavorful edibles, as well as attractive purple-blue flowers that make beautiful dried floral arrangements. Globe artichokes are native to the Mediterranean region, but have been grown in America since colonial times. Thomas Jefferson grew artichokes in his gardens at Monticello and they've been an American favorite ever since.

It's best to start with seedlings, which you can obtain from a nursery or start indoors. Grow your artichokes in spring for harvests lasting through summer and into fall.

WHEN TO SOW	SUN / PART SHADE	SEED SPACING	ROW SPACING	PLANTING DEPTH	SPACING AFTER THINNING	DAYS TO GERMINATE	DAYS TO MATURITY
Indoors 8 weeks before first frost	Sun	2-4 feet	3-4 feet	¼ inch	n/a	10-21	60-90

Soil and Fertilizing

It's best to have your soil tested before planting, so you know what nutrients and pH adjustments may be needed to support your crop. For a thorough soil test, consult your local county extension office.

Artichokes prefer fertile, well-drained sandy or loamy soil, with a balanced pH at or near 7.0. They also need a minimum soil temperature of 60° F. Once you've planted your seedlings, mulch the soil to keep weeds away and retain moisture.

Planting

Pick a sunny spot for your artichoke plants. Give them plenty of room to spread, too, since these spiky plants can get up to four feet tall and 4-6 feet wide.

When planting seedlings, wait to transplant for 8-10 days after the last spring frost has passed, while nighttime temperatures are still about 50° F. In the central and southern states, your artichokes may flower during their first year of growth, but in areas with short growing seasons, artichokes won't flower until the second year, so be patient. To overwinter them, cut them back to a foot tall and mulch them.

Watering

Artichokes need about one inch of water per week, delivered a little at a time. Drip irrigation is recommended, but if you have to water from overhead, do so in the early afternoon.

Harvesting / Storage

Artichokes produce a larger flower on the main stem, with secondary flowers on either side. They're ready for harvest when they reach maximum size, but before the bud leaves open. If they start to open, harvest immediately! For multiple harvests in a year, harvest the top flower buds first, then the secondary ones as they ripen.

You can eat the artichoke petals, heart, and stem, and they're all delicious when steamed or blanched, especially with butter or oil. A versatile veggie, chopped artichoke tastes fantastic in entrees, dips, and side dishes alike.

It's fine to store fresh artichokes in the refrigerator at temperatures just above freezing. The hearts can be pickled or preserved in olive oil for later enjoyment, and can also be blanched and then frozen in batches.

 For soil testing or other questions specific to your growing climate, please contact your local county extension agent. Visit <http://www.almanac.com/content/cooperative-extension-services> to find the office nearest you.