SALSIFY

Salsify is commonly known as oyster plant because the flavor of the cooked roots is similar to that of oysters. The thick fleshy root of the plant, resembling a thin, white carrot, is dug in the fall or allowed to stay in the soil for digging throughout the winter.

Varieties

Mammoth Sandwich Island.

When to plant

Plant salsify about the same time as you would parsnips, beets, or carrots in the spring. Because it normally requires all season to develop, fall plantings are rare.

Spacing

Plant seeds 0.5-0.75 inch deep and allow 2-3 inches between each plant after thinning. Rows may be as close as 15 inches.

Care

Salsify grows slowly in the early season, and careful shallow cultivation to keep it well weeded is important. Once the plant is established, it is drought hardy and not susceptible to common garden disease or insects.
Harvesting

The flavor of salsify does not develop until several freezes have occurred in the fall. The long thin roots usually require digging to remove them. You can dig salsify during the winter as long as the ground is not frozen, or it can be left in the ground for digging the next spring before plant regrowth. Store salsify in a plastic bag in a refrigerator after trimming off the tops.

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