

## **Artichokes**

*(Globe Artichokes and Jerusalem Artichokes)*

**GLOBE ARTICHOKE:** The globe artichoke is a perennial plant in the sunflower family, closely related to thistles, native to the Mediterranean region. It is a beautiful shrubby plant, 3-5 feet tall and wide. The immature flower bud is edible and delicious.

When planting artichokes; choose a location in full sun. Start by amending the existing soil by blending in one of our **high quality composts** so that it is 50% compost, 50% soil. Next, mix in a **high phosphorus dry fertilizer** as well as a **mineral supplement** containing calcium and zinc. Adding **beneficial streptomyces** to the planting will help prevent root diseases that can occur. If you have shallow soil or poor drainage, make a raised bed using a well-draining soil, adding all of the amendments listed above except for the compost.

Bare root artichokes need to be kept moist and planted as soon as they are purchased, while containerized artichokes can remain in the pots until ready for planting. Give each plant a 3-4 foot diameter space in which to grow. The crowns should be planted so that the roots are below ground and the dormant stems are above ground. Press the soil firmly around the crown to make good soil contact. Water thoroughly after planting, and follow with a drench of **Liquid Seaweed** to get it started. A liquid fertilizer may be used every week or two to strengthen and feed plants. Also add more of the dry fertilizer every 4 to 6 weeks for best production. Artichokes prefer regular, deep watering to keep soil moist, but not soggy. Protect the plant with **Row Cover** or other material during hard freezes.

When plants are 5 to 6 inches tall, add 3 inches of mulch around them, such as **Pine Straw**. Avoid placing mulch on or near the stem. Artichokes grow slowly in the cooler weather, and then rapidly in early spring. With care, each plant can produce six to nine artichokes in April and May. Harvest artichoke flower buds while they are still compact, before the flower begins opening. Cut the stem 2-3 inches below the bud. Just for fun, allow at least one bud to open so that you can see and smell the beautiful, thistle-like flower. After harvest, cut artichokes to the ground to force them into summer dormancy. New shoots should return in the cooler fall temperatures to produce again the next spring. You may treat them as an annual and remove the plants whenever they stop producing, then replant for a new crop in the fall.

**JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE (Sunchoke):** The Jerusalem Artichoke is a native North American sunflower that produces an edible tuber. Fresh, it has a texture like a water chestnut. Cooked, it has a nutty flavor and soft texture like a potato. Unlike the potato, the storage carbohydrate in the sunchoke is inulin, rather than starch. Inulin converts in the body to fructose rather than glucose, which is better tolerated by diabetics. *Inulin may be hard to digest for some, so try small amounts first.*

Prepare the soil and fertilize the same as you would for Globe Artichokes. Jerusalem artichokes will get 4-8 feet tall, and produce an attractive yellow flower. They can fit well into a landscape garden bed if placed toward the back. They also have a tendency to spread from pieces that are left in the ground after harvest, and may become weedy if not kept in check. Each plant may yield 6-12 sunchoke. Plant each one 2 inches deep and 18 inches apart. Tubers begin to form in summer, but should not be harvested until after frost has killed the top portion of the plant. The tubers are about 4 inches long by 2 or 3 inches wide and may be as deep as 12 inches below the soil. Harvest them carefully to avoid damaging the thin skin. Rinse, pat dry and store immediately in the refrigerator. They will keep in the fridge up to two weeks if stored in a perforated plastic bag. Sunchoke may also be overwintered in the soil undisturbed and harvested in spring.