

The ***Veg of the Month*** for **January** is **chicory!**

This multi-use plant is not commonly grown by amateur gardeners, but it is reasonably easy to grow.

Uses:

- A crop of leaves is produced from early summer to mid-autumn (8 weeks plant to harvest time) makes a delightful addition to salads.
- The roots, particularly of the Witloof variety, can be lifted and stored in a dark place they will produce chicons, a delicacy in winter months (32 weeks plant to harvest time).
- Roots can be baked, ground and made into a delicious hot drink OR used as a coffee substitute (40:60 ratio mixture with coffee)

Chicory prefers a light well dug soil which is reasonably fertile. It can be grown in full sun or partial shade. It's a good crop for growing between rows of peas and sweet corn. At the beginning of the season the chicory will get full sun. As the season progresses the growing peas / sweet corn will shade the chicory from the full sun.

What to do with your veg in January:

- Continue sowing short season summer crops
- Continue sowing winter seeds and transplant seedlings
- Continue winding gentsquash and butternut up tripods and tomatoes to supports
- Sow in green manures and keep the ground well-mulched
- Foliar spray with seaweed (especially tomatoes)
- Water regularly in dry weather
- Keep an eye out for mildew in summer rainfall areas
- Harvest regularly whatever is ripe (especially beans and squash) and enjoy your produce
- Plan autumn and winter planting

Other veg to be planted in January are strawberries, lettuce, celery, broccoli, beans, radish, sweetcorn, squash, turnip, watermelon, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, cucumber, cauliflower, potatoes, peppers and pumpkin.

Pop into Starke Ayres Garden Centre to stock up on this month's healthy winner.

For more information on chicory, visit the Gardening Information page of our website.