



## Growing Instructions

### Artichoke

#### Sowing Outdoors:

- Not Recommended.

#### Sowing Indoors:

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil to start your seedlings.
- Wrap artichoke seeds in a damp towel and store in the refrigerator for two weeks before sowing. This will provide the cold period that they need in order to germinate.
- Artichoke plants require a 120 day growing season, so direct sowing of seed in the spring is not recommended.
- Start plants indoors during the Winter months. Use a 8-10 cm planter and a nutrient-rich soil.
- Seedlings emerge in 21 to 28 days
- Keep temperatures moderate 21-24 C.
- Once sprouted, keep the soil moist but not saturated.
- Artichokes are heavy feeders too, so it's advisable to begin weekly applications with a diluted fertiliser solution.
- Once the seedlings are three to four weeks old, cull the weakest artichoke plants, leaving only one per pot.
- When the seedlings are ready for transplant into perennial beds, select a sunny location which has good drainage and rich, fertile soil.
- Prior to planting, test the soil and amend if necessary. Artichoke plants prefer a soil pH between 6.5 to 7.5.
- When planting, space perennial artichoke plants a minimum of 1 m apart.

#### Planting in the Garden:

- For best results use sterile, disease free and weed free soil.
- When the seedlings are ready for transplant into perennial beds, select a sunny location which has good drainage and rich, fertile soil.
- Prior to planting, test the soil and amend if necessary. Artichoke plants prefer a soil pH between 6.5 to 7.5.
- Good drainage is crucial to prevent the roots from rotting, especially in areas where they will be overwintered. However, the soil must also be able to retain water long enough to allow the roots to take it in during hot summers.
- When planting, space perennial artichoke plants a minimum of 1m apart.

#### Growing Tips:

- Artichokes grow best in full sun.
- Deeply water artichoke plants at planting time, and water them deeply at least once or twice per week.
- Artichokes favour areas with mild winters 10 to 15 degrees C and cool, moist summers 20 to 25 degrees.
- Artichokes are heavy feeders, so add an organic balanced fertiliser. For the amount of fertiliser to use, follow the product label instructions. Feed the plants periodically throughout the growing season.

- Keep weeds under control during the growing season. Weeds compete with plants for water, space and nutrients, so control them by either cultivating often or use a mulch to prevent their seeds from germinating. Avoid disturbing the soil around the plants when weeding.
- Keep plants well-watered during dry periods to promote rapid, uninterrupted growth. Plants need about 2cm of rain per week during the growing season. Use a rain gauge to check to see if you need to add water. It's best to water with a drip or trickle system that delivers water at low pressure at the soil level. If you water with overhead sprinklers, water early in the day so the foliage has time to dry off before evening, to minimise disease problems. Keep the soil moist but not saturated.
- Monitor for pests and diseases. Check with your local Garden Centre for pest controls recommended for your area.

### **Harvest and Preserving Tips:**

- Cut as soon as the heads begin to open. The edible part is the fleshy, 'half-moon' shape at the base of each scale and the heart.
- For multiple harvests, cut the flower bud one inch below the bud and allow the stem to send out additional flower buds.
- Successive buds will be smaller than the first, but just as tasty.
- The artichoke petals, heart, and stem all contain the tender fibre that is so delicious when steamed.
- Store fresh artichokes in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for a week.
- Artichoke hearts may be preserved in olive oil, or pickled.
- Artichoke hearts or the whole bed may be blanched and frozen.
- Artichoke plants could produce for about three years and will develop side shoots at their bases. At this time, you can lift, divide, and replant the new shoots.