

The “sunroot” fills you up

The Jerusalem artichoke brings variety to winter cooking – and satisfies you for a long time with few calories. In Switzerland, the season for this large tuber lasts until March.

lid. The Jerusalem artichoke is a root vegetable belonging to the same genus as the sunflower. Its geographical roots are in Mexico. Jerusalem artichoke, sunroot, sunchoke or Canadian truffle are other familiar names for Jerusalem artichoke.

Arrival in Europe around 1610

This winter vegetable quickly established itself as fodder and food in its native region. It first spread throughout North America and Canada. Around 1610, French explorers and emigrants who had survived a famine sent these unknown tubers by ship to Europe for the first time.

Once in France, the "Indian tuber" was named after an indigenous people from Brazil, several tubers were brought to Paris as a curiosity: the Tupinambas. At the same time as in Paris, the Indian tuber arrived in the Vatican, where the name "girasole articiocco" (sunflower artichoke) was agreed upon.

Replaced by the potato

The Jerusalem artichoke was most popular in France, where the tuber with its sweet hazelnut-like taste gained popularity from the beginning of the 17th century. However, from the middle of the 18th century, it was gradually replaced by the potato, which was more productive and more caloric. Nevertheless, the Indian tuber is still cul-



(Picture wikipedia)



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tivated on almost all continents, particularly in North America, Russia, Australia and Asia.

In Switzerland, the Jerusalem artichoke has been cultivated commercially in the Bernese Seeland since 1978. The Jerusalem artichoke season in Switzerland lasts from November to March. This root vegetable can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in soups. The tuber is also very good for frying, with a taste similar to potato chips. Its taste when cooked is reminiscent of artichoke.

The plant is a neophyte

In addition to valuable minerals, carbohydrates and vitamins, Jerusalem artichokes contain a lot of inulin, a dietary fibre that satisfies the appetite for a long time.

Unfortunately, the Jerusalem artichoke is a very vigorous invasive plant that multiplies very quickly via its rhizome, an underground root system. In doing so, it quickly displaces other species. Anyone planting Jerusalem artichokes in their garden is well advised to erect a root barrier to prevent the roots from spreading too far.

Advice

Jerusalem artichokes can be stored in the refrigerator for a maximum of a few days. As it browns quickly (within a few minutes) after cutting, it should be eaten quickly after preparation.

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(Translation «Swiss Standpoint»)