

Dave Hergert has been growing and processing chicory for 22 years at his farm in Nebraska.



Chicory Offers Flavor, Health Benefits

Chicory is not an easy crop to grow, but there is good demand for it as a coffee additive, and because of its health benefits. It's rich in inulin, a beneficial prebiotic, says Dave Hergert, who has been growing and processing chicory for 22 years through his businesses.

Cultivated chicory is not the same as the forage chicory that grows wild in many areas, he explains. Cultivated chicory starts as seeds that look similar to dandelion seeds that are planted in April and mature into roots ready to harvest in October.

"It looks like sugar beets. But once it's out of the ground we only have 48 hours to wash, slice and dry it," Hergert explains.

"Weed competition is a big issue. It takes a lot of management," he adds, noting that the crop requires mechanical cultivation with only one herbicide for broadleaf weeds.

Chicory doesn't tolerate hot climates, so it does well in the region's 4,000-ft. elevation. Hergert provides all the equipment for planting and harvesting and invested in

an expensive drying plant. Once dried, the chicory can be ground and roasted for a coffee additive or blend or ground for flour to use in a variety of foods.

Inulin from chicory stays in the bowel and enhances digestion and promotes gut health for both humans and dogs. Some people use chicory for other health issues.

Most of Hergert's chicory is sold wholesale to dog food, coffee and tea companies.

"It has a bold, rich flavor without the caffeine," Hergert says.

Consumers can purchase roasted chicory by the pound (\$7 plus shipping) through the business' website. Chicory flour is also available for the same price, and orders are shipped with recipes.

Europeans and Americans who enjoy gourmet coffee have been blending coffee with chicory for generations, Hergert says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chicory USA, 1424 Ave. B, Scottsbluff, Neb. 69361 (ph 308-632-2315; hm@hergertmilling.com; www.chicoryusa.com).



The metal basket is bolted onto a plate attached to the mower. There's 1 1/4-in. square tubing that 1-in. tubing slides down into.

"Garden Basket" Added To Zero-Turn Mower

Max Welch of Austin, Ark., has a large greenhouse and garden on his property.

"My wife and I needed a better way to carry garden and greenhouse produce," Welch says. "She needed something on wheels to make it easier."

So, he put together a fold-up basket that would attach to the back of his zero-turn riding lawn mower.

"We didn't have a golf cart or anything like that," he says. "The only thing we had available to move produce was the mower."

Welch says it was hard to come up with a design. He wanted something that would fold up out of the way when they weren't transporting produce.

"It's kind of like a Reese Hitch," he says. "It has sockets like a trailer hitch and is built with two of those, one on each side. I can pick the whole mechanism up or fold it up and pin it out of the way while we mow."

The metal basket is bolted onto a plate attached to the mower. There's 1 1/4-in. square tubing that 1-in. tubing slides down into.

"That 1-in. tubing has an L-shaped bracket that will either hold it when it's folded down or hold it up and it pins," Welch says.

He built the carrier from scratch after visiting a friend who'd just replaced his air conditioner's condenser unit. The rods in the bottom are from an air conditioner grill.

"I like that grill better than expanded metal," he says. "And it's what I had available."

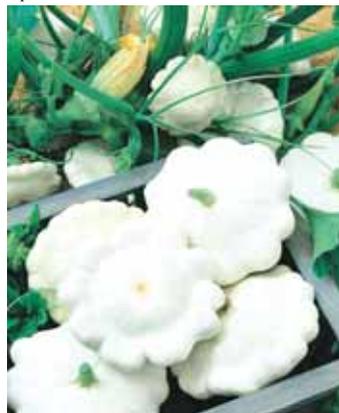
While he's not making any other baskets for sale, Welch says it would be easy to attach something similar on any other zero-turn mower.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Max Welch, 276 Seven Gables Road, Austin, Ark. 72007 (ph 662-701-8530).

Amazing Varieties Of Summer Squash

There's an old joke that you shouldn't leave your car unlocked in the summer because someone will likely fill it with zucchini.

But why grow plain old zucchini when you could have Emperors Jade or Green Zebra squash that's ideal for grilling? Get colorful and change up the shape with yellow 49er summer squash or Moonbeam pie-shaped squash.



Moonbeam Squash

We found a huge variety of summer and winter squash at Seeds By Design, a California wholesale distributor. While many are green and cylindrical, there are plenty of variations.



Greyzinni Squash

Greyzinni, for example, is a dappled, light-colored grey and green squash that matures early at 43 days and targets the international and ethnic markets. The striped, yellow/green Giallo De Italia and light green Genovese and Romanesco target Italian markets.



Partial Eclipse Squash

With so many choices, it's important to read the descriptions that provide maturity dates, color and texture of the squash. Also, some, like the Partial Eclipse scalloped squash, can be eaten as a summer squash or allowed to fully develop and use as a winter squash.



Green Zebra Squash

Since Seeds by Design sells to wholesalers and dealers and not retail, watch for some of their varieties in your favorite garden catalog or business.

Contact: www.seedsbydesign.com.

He Spells Out Names With Pony Shoes

Brandon Roost has figured out how to write the alphabet with pony shoes, and horse lovers and ranchers ask him to spell out all kinds of messages or names. Many hang over horse stalls, while others identify ranch or family names.

He uses pony shoes, which are actually more expensive than horseshoes, but Roost says the small, rounder shoes work better.

"They look more like letters. The smaller they are, the more intricate it looks," he says. Most shoes need to be modified to shape different letters, and there are challenges putting some letters next to each other, such as two Ts. But after a decade of cutting and welding, the Wisconsin artist has his pony shoe alphabet figured out.

The pony shoe signs are polished before being shipped. Customers can finish them with clearcoat or let them rust naturally. Signs can be attached to rope or chain to hang or nailed securely through the shoes' nail holes.

The price of \$20/letter includes shipping. "You can have them computer cut out for about the same price," Roost says. "This has a more personal touch and often becomes a memorial piece."



Roost uses pony shoes to create letters used for custom signs.

Roost also does other horseshoe art and metal sculptures that can be seen on his website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, customerservice@horseshoenames.com; www.horseshoenames.com; Etsy: WhiskeyRiverTrading.