

YACON

(Bolivian Sunroot – *Smallanthus sonchifolius*)

“The Best Vegetable You’ve Never Eaten”

A tuber from South America with a crunchy texture. The flavor is a cross between apples, watermelon and very mild celery. Yacon means “water root” in the Inca language.

It can be eaten raw or cooked into other foods. Stays crunchy when cooked. Yacon will improve salads, soups, stir frys, pasta sauces and is very good chopped finely in mashed potatoes.

To prepare tubers for eating, rub off thin brown film with the green side of a “scotch brite pad” or something comparable and use as desired.

Buy baby plants or start rhizomes in greenhouse or windowsill. Plant out after last freeze (think tomatoes). The plant can grow to 3.5 feet tall in our area and can produce as many as 8 large tubers. It needs to grow all summer and fall until first frost, then dig and store tubers in a cold non-freezing place through winter, refrigerate in April. Sweetness will develop in storage around January to March.

Eating Yacon tubers is purported to be good for relief from acid indigestion. Also, it has been shown to reduce or eliminate acid reflux.

The main sweetness is Inulin, a fructose polymer, which is not digested well and instead is pushed into the colon where it is eaten by our gut bacteria; enhancing our immune system and overall digestion.