

CIBOULE

by Mike Mason

What is ciboule I hear you cry! Well, I don't know their name in English but I have recently come across them in France where they are called ciboule, so I use the French word. Ciboule are perennial spring onions which grow under the ground and are believed to have originated in Siberia. They can be cropped all the year round – although they are a little small in the middle of winter. They are a strong spring onion, ideal in salads for those who like a spring onion with a lot of bite. They are also excellent in Chinese cooking and in other dishes, or used generally as onions.

I acquired my ciboule about 1985 at a plant sale where someone sold me a few bulbs - which looked like shallots - and told me to plant them six inches deep. After a year each one had produced between 30 and 50 spring onions. One digs them up for the kitchen, putting one back into the hole and, a year later, one has 30 to 50 more. They are extremely prolific and do not appear to suffer from attacks by pests or diseases. They are grown about a foot apart and are best grown like leeks, ie a hole over 6 inches deep is made with a crowbar and the ciboule popped in and watered once.

Good gardening!

MIKE MASON