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Swiss Chard

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USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM Newsletter

June 20, 2011 Vol. 2 Issue 6

Alanna harvesting a huge, rogue spinach plant in our yellow hoophouse.

Conquering the Bounty

If you feel that your kitchen is overrun with chard, try these simple, tasty ideas.

- ✓ Toss Swiss chard with spinach greens and lettuce for a delightful garden salad. Add sweet vinaigrette dressing to offset any bitterness from the chard and your favorite salad additions.
- ✓ Swiss chard is a great addition to a lentil soup. Boil chard before adding to the soup. Add as the last ingredient and serve immediately.
- ✓ Add zest to omelets, frittatas, and scrambled eggs by adding some raw or boiled Swiss chard.
- ✓ Sauté Swiss chard as you would spinach.
- ✓ Include boiled chard in your pasta sauces, such as spaghetti sauce or any tomato-based sauce.
- ✓ Substitute for or mix chard with regular lettuce on your favorite sandwiches and tacos.
- ✓ Add chard to your favorite vegetarian lasagna.
- ✓ Toss prepared pasta with olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, and cooked Swiss chard.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Featured Vegetable: Swiss Chard

Chard, commonly referred to as Swiss chard, belongs to the same family as beets and spinach. Although its name suggests that it originated in Switzerland, chard is actually native to the Mediterranean region and is known to have first been grown in Sicily. The name, Swiss chard, originated because a Swiss scientist determined its scientific name.

Chard is a tall, leafy vegetable, which looks similar to beet leaves, and has a similar taste profile to beets and spinach. Its stalk can be almost two feet tall. Different types of chard have varying leaf sizes and various rib colors including green, yellow, orange, white, and red. Swiss chard is a very versatile plant, with crunchy, celery-like stalks and a somewhat bitter flavor when raw.

Chard can be substituted with kale, spinach, mustard greens, and collard greens. Chard grows best between June and August, its peak season. Store Swiss chard as you would lettuce, spinach, or any other leafy green, by following the directions given in our May 16th newsletter from this year. Prepare chard by washing, removing the stalks, and boiling or steaming the leaves. To sweeten the taste of bitter chard, boil it to remove the acids. (**See the "Fabulous Flavors" section on page 2.)**

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

Chard Tart

A springtime tradition in many parts of Italy and France. Kale leaves, spinach, or other spring vegetables can be mixed in or substituted for the chard.

To prepare the pastry, combine in a medium bowl:
2 C flour
½ t salt

Stir in until thoroughly blended:
½ C water
½ C olive oil

Knead the mixture briefly. The dough will be very moist and difficult to roll, so press it into an 11-inch tart pan with a removable rim. Refrigerate for at least one hour.

2 Tbsp. olive oil.
1 onion, diced (red or green onions also good)
1 lb. (8 cups) chard, washed and chopped
3 eggs
1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
1 Tbsp. basil
¼ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper
1/3 cup milk

In large skillet, heat oil. Add onion and cook until soft. Add greens, cook until tender, 8-10 minutes. Add seasonings.

In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, milk, and cheese. Add chard mixture, then scrape all into the prepared tart shell. Bake at 375 degrees until the crust is golden and the filling is firm, 40-45 minutes. Let cool to room temperature before serving.

(Recipe from Joy of Cooking)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Broccoli and peppers need to be harvested right when they're ready. Otherwise flavor and quality diminishes. We want to give you the freshest produce possible so what we have to do to achieve this is to give some shareholders these veggies one week and the rest of the shareholders the same veggies the next week. Let us know if you have any concerns.

If you want to share a simple recipe that highlights one of the veggies we are growing, email us!

Volunteer hours:
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 7am-1pm
Wednesday, Saturday: 10am-1pm

Chard is fabulous in soups because it maintains its texture a lot better than spinach when cooked.

Always use the stems, either separately or with the leaves. They are full of flavor and great in stir-fries.

Organic Techniques: Recipe

Still have some kale left in your fridge from last week's basket? Here's a recipe submitted by Claire, a CSA member. Thanks, Claire!

Kale Soup

4 cups vegetable broth

1 bunch kale (6 to 8 leaves) finely shredded

1/2 cup white grape juice

3 large cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon salt

15 ounce can white beans, undrained

In a medium sized pot, stir together all but beans and simmer 30 minutes. Add beans and simmer another 10 minutes. Serve warm with fresh cracked pepper.

Recipe adapted from cookbook "Local Bounty" by Devra Gartenstein (Portugese Kale and White Bean Soup)

For more information about the USU Student Organic Farm or CSA shares visit:

www.usu.edu/organicfarms

On the Farm News

What a beautiful week! We've had fabulous weather and it look like this week will be beautiful too. We hope you have liked your shares so far this season. For many of you, it may be the first year you've been a "seasonal eater," which is a bit different than a regular diet. For instance, right now while the weather is cooler, you have been receiving a lot of lettuce, green onions, and asparagus, but when those go out of season, you won't be getting those foods very much or al all for the rest of the year! When you're a seasonal eater, the key is to completely enjoy the vegetables in season while they are here. Enjoy them enough to be satisfied for the entire year. Then when new vegetables come in season, move on and enjoy those.

Enjoying the veggies from the farm isn't too hard to do since they are so flavorful. Many of you have commented on how much you have enjoyed the lettuce, which is fabulous to hear!

The vegetables soon to be in season are peas, kohlrabi, broccoli, tomatoes, and possibly pak choi.

Veggies to expect next week: lettuce, green onions, radishes, and hopefully cherry tomatoes, broccoli, and spinach.

Article by: Brianne Sherwood

Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

Here is a simple tip for sweetening the taste of bitter chard:

Boiling Swiss chard allows it to free up acids into the boiling water. This brings out a sweeter taste from the chard. Make sure to discard the boiling water after cooking; do not drink it or use it for stock because of its acid content.

3-Minute Swiss Chard

Use a large pot (3 quart) with lots of water and bring to a rapid boil. Add chard to the boiling water. If stems are more than 1-inch wide, cook them for 2 minutes before adding the leaves. If less than 1 inch in width you can boil the leaves and stems together for 3 minutes. Begin timing as soon as you place the chard in the pot if you are using 1 pound or less of chard. If you are cooking large quantities of chard bring the water back to a boil before beginning timing the 3 minutes. Do not cover the pot when cooking chard. Leaving the pot uncovered helps to release more of the acids with the rising steam.

When the chard has finished boiling drain it and press out any excess water. Chard is great served with a small amount of lemon juice, salt, black pepper, and garlic. Or experiment with your favorite spices and seasonings.

(*Recipe from whfoods.com)*

For another simple trick on hiding bitter chard see the "Fabulous Flavors" section from our May 16th newsletter entitled "Sweeten up those Bitter Salad Greens." You may also substitute a portion of the chard called for with spinach in any recipe to provide a less bitter taste.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman