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Kale

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Featured Vegetable: KALE

Kale is the super hero of vegetables. If you have ever gardened you know that kale is super hardy and will withstand even the coldest of frosts. It ALSO has been recognized for it’s amazing health benefits, nutrient richness, and delicious flavor. Kale has the most nutrients per calorie than almost any other food around, making it one of the healthiest vegetables. The more you know about kale, the more you fall in love with it, especially when you know your favorite ways to cook it.

Kale is part of the Brassica family, which also includes broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi. Kale is super high in fiber and antioxidant vitamins A, C, and K. It is also a very good source of potassium and calcium. Eating kale on a regular basis can lower cholesterol because of the high fiber content, which then lowers risk of heart disease. It can also lower cancer risk because of the high antioxidant, carotenoid, and flavonoid content. WOW, right?

The variety we grow on our farm is called Red Russian Kale, which is more tender and sweeter than curly kale and has a more delicate flavor. Always a good thing.

Caring for Kale: Storing and Preparing

You probably will be getting a lot of kale this spring because it grows so well in cache valley and it has the sweetest taste this time of year when it is a bit cooler outside. Now is the time to enjoy it!

Even if you do like kale, you may want to store some for later instead of eating the whole bunch every week. One way to store kale is to blanch and freeze. Blanching is essential because the kale will get bitter if you just freeze it. (This method can be used for other greens as well such as Swiss chard and spinach.)

1. Trim out the stem of each kale leaf and set aside. Chop the leaf part into 2-3” sections.
2. Blanch by dunking the chopped kale leaves in boiling water for 2 minutes then dunking them in ice water to immediately stop the cooking.
3. Dry the leaves and place in zip lock bags. Try to get as much air out of the bag as possible. Place in freezer.

Using kale in dishes you already make is another easy way to use up that bunch. Try adding it to:
- Chili
- Soups
- Pasta
- Lasagna
- Stir-fries

Baked Kale Chips

Unless the leaves are small, I personally think the flavor of kale isn’t the best raw, although some do like it that way. Steaming and baking are both great ways that preserve the abundance of nutrients and bring out the delicious flavor of kale. This recipe is a favorite of mine. Give it a try.

1 bunch of kale  Rice wine vinegar (optional)
Olive oil  Salt (or the Sesame Salt under “Fabulous Flavors”)

Preheat oven to 325F. While the oven is heating, prepare the leaves by cutting out each leaf’s rib and then cutting or tearing the leaves into chip-size pieces. Thoroughly wash and dry each leaf (very important to dry). In a large bowl or large sealable bag, add about 2 Tbsp of oil for each 8 ounces of leaves. Add the kale and mix thoroughly. Make sure each leaf is completely and totally covered with oil for best results. Lay the kale out in a single layer on a sheet pan and place in oven. After about 15 minutes, shake and move them around to ensure even cooking. After about 15 more minutes, the leaves should be crispy and fully cooked. Remove them from the oven and sprinkle with rice wine vinegar and salt. Enjoy!
Everything Organic: Recipe

CSA member Carly Jugler submitted this awesome recipe that uses many of the veggies you are receiving in your shares this spring. Try it out!

- 1 radish - finely chopped
- 3 asparagus spears-chopped in thirds
- 1 bunch tatsoi (or other Chinese cabbage)
- 1 green onion
- 2 cloves garlic-chopped
- 1/2 standard sized package firm tofu-diced
- 1/2 green bell pepper-diced to desired size

Brown rice as desired

Prepare brown rice to package directions. While brown rice is cooking, put tofu in a skillet with a couple TBSPs oil of your choice. Once tofu is slightly golden in color add garlic, green onion and all veggies and stir fry to desired texture. Spoon brown rice onto plate and serve stir-fry over top. Garnish with green onion, salt, and a little sriracha sauce to spice it up!

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

www.usu.edu/organicfarms

On the Farm News

Hello CSA Members! We hope you enjoyed your share last week! We want everyone to know that the shares will get bigger as the summer goes on. Spring is always a little lean, but come summer, especially late summer and fall you won’t know what to do with the bounty!

We have a couple of exciting projects in the works at the farm right now. Stu, one of our farm interns, has revamped our pickup area this year (I’m sure some of you noticed). It is so much better practically and aesthetically. All we have to do now is paint the benches he made when it stops raining! Or should I say IF it stops raining... 😊

Another project Keenen and Amanda are constructing is an herb garden, which will be a wonderful addition to the farm. This is where you, as CSA members, can come and harvest fresh herbs throughout the week. In the meantime, we have pots of herbs that can be harvested from. The herbs we have right now are chives, sage, and thyme. Soon to come are marjoram and rosemary. Please feel welcome to come anytime during volunteer hours (see under announcements) for herbs!

Veggies to expect next week: Lettuce, chard, spinach, green onions, and herbs (sage, thyme, chives, parsley)

Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques
Try a “Topping” on Your Vegetables

By: Tamara Steinitz Vitale, USU Dept of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences

If you’re looking for a simple way to add flavor, crunch, and nutrition to your vegetables, sprinkle on some nuts or seeds. Toasting them a tad adds unbelievable flavor and boosts the crunch. Toast up a batch to keep on hand, and you’ll find yourself throwing them into salads, stir-fries, rice, or… your mouth! Choose favorites like pecans, almonds, and sunflower seeds, or expand your horizons with hazelnuts or pumpkin seeds.

Here are three simple methods to toast nuts or seeds:

1) Heat a large, heavy dry skillet over medium-high heat. Add nuts or seeds and toast, stirring occasionally, until they start to brown slightly and “pop.”
2) Place on a dry baking sheet in a 400-degree oven, stirring occasionally.
3) Place in a toaster oven for 1-2 toaster cycles.

Don’t let them over-brown or they become bitter, but make sure you allow them to develop a nice “toasty” flavor. Remove from heat, cool thoroughly, and use immediately or store in a sealed jar or bag. If desired, chop coarsely before adding to your dishes.

RECIPE: Sesame Salt

This salt is a delicious condiment for steamed or roasted vegetables, salads, or stir-fries. Once you start using it, you will discard your plain old saltshaker forever. Kids love it!

4 T sesame seeds
2 tsp salt

Toast sesame seeds in a dry skillet or in a toaster oven. Add salt and lightly grind together in a small mill, blender, food processor, or mortar and pestle. Store in a covered jar in the fridge.