2013

Healthful Mustard

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Healthful Mustard

While kale has gained a stronger following in health circles during the last couple of years, mustard remains an unrecognized workhorse of the agricultural world. It goes beyond more than just nutrition; the many species have fulfilled many useful roles throughout the world. Mustard is sometimes tilled into crop fields to suppress diseases and nematodes, and can even be planted in hazardous waste sites to remove heavy metals from the soil. And it can, you know, be delish on hot dogs and all that.

But here at the farm, we focus on the green plant itself, sometimes called India mustard. Among the leafy vegetables, few are as healthful as mustard greens. Even among the cruciferous family of vegetables like kale, cabbage, or broccoli, which are famous for their cancer fighting properties, mustard greens contain among the highest levels of Indoles. These substances are highly toxic to cancer cells and inhibit unchecked cellular growth. Mustard also has among the highest levels of vitamin K and folate in any vegetable, and also possess a surprisingly potent ability to lower cholesterol.

Unlike kale and cabbage, this rowdier family member can range from mildly pungent to downright hot! A sprinkling of leaves adds a pleasant bite to salads, but unless you want to clear your sinuses, a salad of mostly mustard greens may be better off mellowed through cooking. Like other greens, most cooking techniques call for a very short cooking time, leaving the mustard greens wilted but still retaining its fresh green color. A short steaming or sautéing retains more of its beneficial nutrients. They can also be braised as well, where the leaves are slowly cooked in a broth, often with leftover ham hocks or other smoked meats, in a style which is very popular in southern cooking. The zesty flavor pairs well with sweeter foods like caramelized onions or tomatoes, or acidic foods like lemon. So try the mustard greens, your body will thank you for it!

Andrew Croft

Paruppu Keerai (Mustard Green Curry)

This bright and simple curry will bring the taste of southern India into your kitchen. When served with a side of jasmine rice this curry also makes a nutritional complete meal that will thrill the vegetarian in your life. Leftovers can be stored in an air tight container in the refrigerator and enjoyed for up to a week after being cooked.

Ready in: 50 minutes   Serves: 4

Ingredients
1 bunch mustard greens (finely chopped)
1 cup lentils
1 onion (finely diced)
2 cloves garlic (finely minced)
1 small tomato (finely diced)
2 tablespoons coconut (grated)
4 teaspoons oil
½ teaspoon Turmeric power
½ teaspoon mustard seed (crushed)
½ teaspoon cumin seeds
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

Directions
1. Wash lentils under running water in a colander. Remove any shrived seeds then submerge the lentils in warm water. Set lentils aside.
2. Heat oil in a sauce pan. Once warm add crushed mustard seed, and pepper flakes. Cook until aromatic, about 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add onion and garlic to the pan. Cook until they start to become translucent while stirring every three minutes. This should take about ten minutes.
4. Add soaked lentils, tomatoes, turmeric powder, and cumin seeds. Cook for 15 minutes.
5. Add chopped mustard greens and cook for additional 15 minutes. Add additional water if mixture is becoming too thick.
6. Remove from heat and add the coconut. Salt to taste.
7. Serve and Enjoy!

Recipe by Shannon Babb
On the Farm News

Are You Ready for Summer?

A beautiful week completed and we are ready to begin again. There is something important which must be done on the farm, seven days a week. As you know, leaving something undone, even for a day, could result in having to learn some hard lessons. For example something as simple as weeding might easily be left undone. However, weed competition could become disastrous for a plant. Weeds rob needed nutrients, which can cause unwanted stresses and unwanted changes to their natural cycle. The raspberry patches that we weeded this week had a growth spurt right after we weeded them. They are now happily working to give us some yummy berries this season. So remember to weed!

While weeding is a necessary task, I happily admit that’s not all we do. Summer is upon us and our days keep getting hotter. This means our cool season crops need a change from that warm and cozy hoop house, as it was becoming more of a sauna than a sanctuary. We have taken off the plastic and replaced it with a black-netted shade cloth. Temperature control is essential for healthy plants and thanks to our hoop houses we are able to manipulate our temperate climate. So it’s not the tropics but we are able to beat the late frosts during spring.

I wait all winter for the summer, but I admit I love the cooler weather of the fall. I am excited to announce our pumpkin field has been tilled and we will be preparing all summer long for our much anticipated fall event, “Pumpkin Days.” I’m sure we can expect you all for a visit to join in the festivities and to celebrate a changing season with us. However, before all the fun there is always more work to be done. So wish us luck, and please if there is any advice or input you might have come share it with us. We are always waiting for our next challenge!

by Eric Manrique

To learn how to grow your own mustard greens or to build your own hoop house visit USU extension:

Mustard in the Garden

Constructing a Low-cost High Tunnel

What you might see in your next box

arugula
spinach
pakchoi
dwarf siberian kale
lettuce

The farm is looking pretty good. Wouldn't you agree?