

Herkimer County Produce Cycle



Cookbook & Guide

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Please note that information included on each vegetable in this guide regarding growing, preparation, and preservation is limited to basic highlights. More specific information and details can be found at websites noted on page 52.

If you have additional questions, please contact Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County at (315) 866-7920 or email [herkimer@cornell.edu](mailto:herkimer@cornell.edu)

# Why Eat Local?



Eating locally grown and raised foods increases your awareness of where your food comes from, local growing seasons, and the importance of supporting local agriculture. Local foods are fresher and more nutritious

than foods that have traveled many miles and days to get to your table. When you buy direct from local farmers, your dollars stay within your community and strengthen the local economy. This helps to preserve farming as a livelihood and rural landscapes as farmland.



## Herkimer County Produce Cycle

Funding for this guide was provided by the NY State Department of Health "Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play" initiative (CHP) through Herkimer County HealthNet. CHP programs across the state are working to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes by making it easier to be physically active and eat healthy foods.

# Asparagus

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Asparagus is a hardy, long-lived perennial (grows for more than one year); plants can survive for decades so be sure to carefully consider your planting site.
- \* Asparagus plants can be started by seed, division or separation of existing plants and transplanting. Divide plants in early spring if desired.
- \* Asparagus plants prefer loose, deep soil high in organic matter (rich in nutrients).
- \* Purchase disease-free one year old crowns for planting.
- \* If grown from seed, asparagus requires one extra year to establish edible spears.
- \* Plant crowns 4-6 weeks before last frost, 18-24" apart in trenches 8" deep.
- \* Mulch around plants to prevent weeds.
- \* A moderate 2-3 week harvest can be expected from crowns 2-3 years after planting. With each following year, your harvest window will lengthen to a maximum of 6-8 weeks.
- \* Harvest spears when 6-10" long breaking or cutting them off at ground level.
- \* Stop harvesting when spears reduce in size to the diameter of a pencil. Let the smaller, remaining spears grow into ferns.
- \* If unpicked, spears grow to ferns reaching 5-9 feet tall. Cut off fern growth to the ground after they turn yellow and die.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Asparagus is one of the first vegetables harvested in the early spring; and is available May and June.
- \* When you buy asparagus, look for firm stems and tightly closed flower heads (tips) that are deep green or purplish in color.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* 5 spears of cooked asparagus have only 20 calories, no fat, and 2 grams of fiber.
- \* Asparagus is a low-calorie, low-sodium source of vitamins A, C, and B6, folate, potassium, and phytochemicals.
- \* To minimize nutrient loss, keep the amount of water used in cooking to a minimum.
- \* White asparagus is grown underground, which keeps it from turning green. Peel before cooking and use like green asparagus.
- \* Try fresh asparagus with lemon juice.
- \* For easy grilling, skewer several spears with bamboo skewers to make a raft. Spray with oil; season as desired; grill until tender.
- \* Asparagus is great stir fried, steamed, microwaved, grilled or roasted.
- \* Cook until crisp-tender or roast with olive oil and parmesan cheese.
- \* Microwave 4-7 minutes until crisp-tender.
- \* Before cooking asparagus, cut or snap stalks off at their natural bend. Peel more mature or larger stalks.
- \* Wash well before eating.
- \* Tender asparagus spears are tastiest when eaten as soon as possible after harvest.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Refrigerate fresh asparagus for up to four days in a plastic bag or standing upright in water (like flowers in a vase). You can also wrap a damp paper towel around cut ends of asparagus to keep them moist in the refrigerator.
- \* To freeze, first blanch in boiling water: small spears 2 minutes; medium 3 minutes; and large 4 minutes. Then cool in an ice water bath; drain; and freeze in freezer-safe bags or containers.

## Asparagus Casserole

- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 2 Tablespoons regular flour
- 3/4 teaspoon herbal blend (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup low fat (skim) milk
- 1/2 cup low-fat shredded Swiss or cheddar cheese
- 1/2 pound sliced, sautéed mushrooms (makes 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup very finely cut celery
- 1 pound cooked tender-crisp asparagus (2-1/2 to 3 cups)
- 1 cup crushed crackers (saltines are fine)

Heat oil in a saucepan. Stir in flour and seasonings; cook until mixture bubbles. Add milk gradually, stirring until blended. Bring rapidly to a boil; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat; add cheese and stir until cheese is melted. Mix in mushrooms and celery. Line the bottom of a lightly oiled shallow 1-1/2-quart casserole with the asparagus. Pour cheese mixture over asparagus. Sprinkle with cracker crumbs. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes or until thoroughly heated. If desired, place under broiler until crumbs are browned.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (140 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 230 mg sodium)*

## Asparagus Frittata

- 2 large eggs
- 4 egg whites (6 Tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), cut into 1-inch pieces (3 cups)

In a bowl, beat eggs & tarragon lightly, seasoning as desired. In a non-stick skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Stir-fry asparagus until tender (about 3 minutes). Pour egg mixture into pan over asparagus.

When the eggs are almost cooked, flip frittata over. Cover and lower heat. Cook an additional minute or until eggs are completely set.

*Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (50 calories, 3 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 40 mg sodium)*

## Garlic Asparagus

1 Tablespoon unsalted butter

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 bunch fresh asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces

Melt the butter in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add garlic, stir for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add asparagus. Cover and cook for 15 minutes, or until asparagus is tender, stirring often. Season as desired.

Use as side dish or serve over whole wheat pasta, or brown rice.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (35 calories, 2 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 gram fiber, 0 mg sodium)*

Tip: The bottom ends of asparagus stalks can become tough and hard to eat. To break these ends off before cooking, hold the bottom end of the stalk with two fingers, and the rest of the stalk with your other hand. Bend the stalk - the asparagus will snap where it becomes tough.



# Beets

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Beets are an easy to grow annual (need to plant every year).
- \* Beets provide two delicious and nutritious sources of food: beet roots and beet greens (tops).
- \* Beets prefer well drained, loose soil free of large stones.
- \* Beets grow poorly in highly acidic soil. Plant in soil with a pH of 6.0 or higher.
- \* Plant beet seeds outside in spring when soil temperatures are above 40°F.
- \* Plant seeds 3/4" deep and 1" apart in rows 12" apart.
- \* For continuous harvest, make additional plantings three weeks apart until mid-summer.
- \* When seedlings reach 4" tall, thin to 3-4" spacings if you would like small, tender beets or 6" spacings for large beet roots.
- \* Cut rather than pull plants when thinning so as not to disturb roots. Thinnings can be eaten.
- \* Unlike most root crops, beets can be planted indoors and transplanted outside.
- \* Keep soil well weeded.
- \* The best beet color and flavor develops in cool conditions under bright sun when the most sugar is produced. Plants can tolerate a light frost.



## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Select beets with firm, smooth skins and non-wilted leaves if still attached. Smaller beets are more tender.
- \* Beets are available from June-November.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Beets are fat free, saturated fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium and are an excellent source of foliate.
- \* Both beet roots and beet tops (greens) are edible, nutritious and delicious.
- \* Large beets with tough skins may be peeled before eating. When chopping or peeling beets, wear rubber gloves. Beet juice stains hands, fabric and countertops. Rinse beet stained items immediately.
- \* To minimize nutrient loss, keep the amount of water used in cooking to a minimum.

**Baked Beets:** Cut off the green tops, leaving an inch of the stem to prevent bleeding and flavor loss. Scrub beets, wrap them in foil, and bake at 400°F for 45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours, depending on size.

**Microwave Beets:** Place 2 to 3 small beets in small amount of water and microwave for 8 to 15 minutes or until soft.

**Quick Canned Beet Salad:** Pour sliced beets from a can (drain about 1/2 of the liquid) into a bowl with cover. Add red wine vinegar and a little bit of olive oil and oregano. Cover and shake. Serve as a side dish or.

\*Canned beets often contain added sugar. Always read label on can.

**Grilled Beets:** Add fresh beets with vegetables to skewers. Drizzle lightly with olive oil; and heat thoroughly on the grill.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Remove beet leaves, leaving about an inch of the stems. Use leaves as edible greens - raw or cooked. Store roots in a plastic bag in refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Wash thoroughly before cooking.
- \* Freezing beets: Cook beets until tender. Cool, chop or slice. Drain, pack in freezer containers or bags; and freeze at 0°F or lower.

## Beet Greens

- 1 large bunch beet greens (tops)
- 1 Tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup leftover cooked ham (optional)
- hot peppers, chopped, to taste (optional)
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Wash beet greens, rinsing each leaf very well to remove sand. Cut in large pieces. Simmer greens in a small amount of water until tender but not mushy.

While greens are cooking, heat oil in large skillet. Add onions, garlic and ham, if desired. Sauté until onion is translucent.

Drain beet greens and add to skillet. Stir in Parmesan cheese. Mixture should be moist. Italian style bread crumbs can be added, to absorb extra liquid.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup, (70 calories, 14.5 grams fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 220 mg sodium)*

## Beet and Carrot Salad

- 1 pound beets, peeled and grated
- 1 pound carrots, peeled and grated
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon cider or balsamic vinegar
- salt and pepper, or hot sauce, to taste

Peel and grate the carrots and beets. Combine all ingredients in a large salad bowl. Toss until well mixed. Let sit for 30 minutes before serving—the beets and carrots will release juices as they sit.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 cup (70 calories, 2.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 gram fiber, 85 mg sodium)*

## Raw Beet Slaw

- 4 medium beets, shredded
- 4 carrots, shredded
- 2 apples, shredded
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup light mayonnaise
- 1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon honey

Rinse and scrub beets and carrots until clean. Wash apples. Mix the mayonnaise, vinegar and honey in a small bowl and set aside. Shred beets, carrots and apples using a grater. Add the raisins, then the dressing and stir to combine. Keeps well in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

\*You can add more of any ingredient according to your taste. Also try grating raw cucumber and/or zucchini into the salad (1 medium of each).

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup, (80 calories, 1 gram fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 280 mg sodium)*



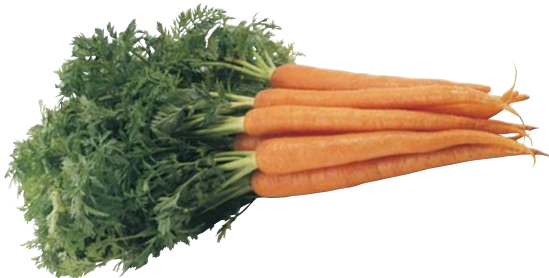
# Carrots

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Carrots are easy to grow annuals (seeds must be planted annually).
- \* Carrots grow best in full sun and require well drained soil.
- \* Plant shorter varieties in rocky or poor soil.
- \* Plant seeds outdoors in 1/2" deep soil, 1/2" apart, in rows 12-24" apart.  
Water soil lightly.
- \* Seeds take from 7-21 days to emerge.
- \* Before plants are 2" tall, thin plants to 1-4" apart to reduce competition from neighboring plants. To thin plants, cut rather than pull which reduces disturbance of neighboring carrot plants.
- \* Keep soil around plants weed free until harvest time.
- \* Mulch to keep soil around plants cool and weed-free.
- \* Carrots can be harvested early but are best harvested when orange tops are visibly poking out of ground.
- \* Carrots can tolerate light frost.
- \* For a continuous harvest, plant carrots several times throughout the season from early spring to early fall.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Carrots are harvested from July through December.
- \* At the market, look for carrots that are solid and firm with a bright (usually orange) color.
- \* Avoid carrots that are cracked, shriveled, soft or that have dark spots.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Carrots are an excellent source of Vitamin C, Beta-carotene and Fiber. The human body converts Beta-carotene into Vitamin A which is a crucial vitamin to maintain proper eyesight.
- \* 1/2 cup serving contains just 25 calories and zero fat.
- \* Carrots also contain carotenoids and flavonoids: a class of food components called phytochemicals.
- \* Carrots are about 87% water.
- \* Carrots taste great either raw or cooked.
- \* "Baby" carrots are actually large carrots cut into small pieces.
- \* Carrots are in the Parsley family.
- \* Rinse before preparing. Rub briskly under clean running water.
- \* Peel after washing if desired. Young, tender carrots may not need peeling.
- \* Add carrots to soup, stew, baked goods and stir fry.
- \* Serve raw carrots plain, with dip or add to salad.
- \* To minimize nutrient loss, keep the amount of water used in cooking to a minimum.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Remove leafy tops before storing in refrigerator.
- \* Refrigerate in plastic bag in crisper drawer.
- \* Carrots can be stored for several weeks with proper refrigeration.
- \* Planted carrots can be stored in the ground until needed; even throughout the winter!
- \* Freezing carrots: Blanch whole carrots in boiling water for 5 minutes and diced or sliced carrots for 2 minutes. Cool in ice water bath to stop cooking process. Drain and pack in freezer safe bags or containers.

## Carrot Oven Fries

- 1 pound baby carrots (cut larger ones in half)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 (0.4-ounce) packet ranch dressing seasoning mix
- vegetable cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, toss the carrots with oil and ranch dressing seasoning mix until well coated. Spray baking sheet with cooking spray and arrange carrots in a single layer on the sheet. Bake 25-30 minutes or until edges begin to turn brown, turning once to ensure even cooking.

*Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (60 calories, 10 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 gram fiber, 110 mg sodium)*

## Carrot Confetti Salad

- 2 cups peeled and grated carrot
- 1 cup grated red cabbage
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard
- dash of pepper

In large bowl, mix together grated carrots and cabbage. In small bowl, mix together remaining ingredients. Mix dressing with carrots and cabbage.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (60 calories, 5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 35 mg sodium)*

# Carrot Raisin Salad

6 medium carrots, grated

1 cup raisins

2 Tablespoons plain or vanilla yogurt\*

juice of 1 orange (approximately 6 Tablespoons)

1/4 cup shelled sunflower seeds

Wash, peel, and grate carrots. Mix all ingredients. Chill and serve.

\* Add more yogurt as needed for consistency desired.

*Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (110 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 gram fiber, 40 mg sodium)*



# Cucumbers

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Cucumbers prefer a sunny location with well-drained, fertile soil.
- \* Cucumbers are an annual plant, meaning you have to plant them every year.
- \* Cucumber varieties include pickling and slicing, vining and bush. "Burpless" varieties do not produce gas that affects some people.
- \* Begin growing outside with transplants or by seed when soil temperature reaches 65°F. Cucumbers are very sensitive to cold and can not be planted outside too early.
- \* Plant seeds 1" deep in hills with 3-6 seeds per hill or plant 2-6" apart in rows that are 5-6' apart.
- \* When plants are 2-3" tall, thin plants so they are 2-3 per hill or one plant every 8-15" if planted in a row.
- \* To save space, train vining varieties to grow vertically up a trellis.
- \* Water plants regularly. Dry soil may develop bitter tasting cucumbers.
- \* Use row covers to help prevent insect problems. Remove row covers when plants flower to allow pollination by insects.
- \* Mulching around plants helps retain moisture and suppresses weeds.
- \* Harvest mature cucumbers before frost.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Cucumbers are available beginning in July.
- \* Select firm, well shaped cucumbers with dark green color that are heavy for size. If they have shriveled tips or are at all withered, they are past their peak freshness.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Wash cucumbers prior to eating. Some varieties have waxy skins which can be removed by washing with baking soda or by peeling. Peeling skin also removes the bitter taste of some varieties.
- \* Cucumbers do not have to be eaten cold. They also can be baked, boiled, braised, sautéed, pickled or steamed.
- \* Cucumbers are low in calories, fat free, and sodium free.

**Tabouli:** Bulgur, tomato, cucumber, garlic, onion, mint and parsley combine nicely with a spicy lemon dressing in this delicious Middle Eastern salad.

**Cucumber Wrap:** Add chopped cucumber to cooked ground beef and chopped tomatoes. Add favorite dressing, if desired. Wrap in a tortilla for a delicious lunch.

**Cucumber Appetizer:** Top a slice of party rye or pumpernickel bread with a smear of light mayo, a fat slice of cucumber and a sprinkle of lemon pepper for a delicious appetizer.

**Cucumber Salad:** Mix chopped cucumbers, tomatoes, onions and avocado for a delicious, chunky salad.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Refrigerate cucumbers in a plastic bag in the crisper for up to 1 week. Once cut, the open surface should be covered with plastic wrap.
- \* Cucumbers do not freeze well.
- \* Certain varieties work best for pickling (e.g. gherkin), however, any kind can be pickled.



## Tzatziki

- 1 cup grated, peeled English cucumber (about 1 medium)
- 1 cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh mint
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Squeeze cucumber dry in a clean kitchen towel. Combine cucumber and remaining ingredients in a small bowl; cover and chill one hour. Serve immediately with toasted pita wedges.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 2 Tablespoons (15 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 grams fiber, 15 mg sodium)*

## Freezer Pickles

Wash and slice very thin:

- 7 medium cucumbers
- 1 onions
- 1 pepper

Make a syrup of the following by heating until sugar is dissolved:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon celery seed

Pour syrup over vegetables and let stand 2 hours in refrigerator. Stir often. Pack into freezer containers, leaving 1-inch headspace. Cover and freeze for up to 6 weeks.

Thaw before serving.



## Cucumber Radish Salsa

2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped  
1 (6-ounce) package radishes, grated  
1 small onion, minced  
1 large tomato, chopped  
2 Tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro  
1/4 cup lime juice  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper  
Garnish: whole radish

Stir together all ingredients except radish garnish. Cover and chill before serving.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (20 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 15 mg sodium)*

## Cool Cucumber Grape Salad

6 cups (about 2 medium) thinly sliced peeled cucumbers  
2 cups local seedless grapes, halved  
1/4 cup chopped chives or green onion  
1/3 cup white wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon olive oil  
1 Tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon bottled hot pepper seasoning

Combine cucumber, grapes and chives in a mixing bowl. Whisk together vinegar, olive oil, honey, salt and hot pepper seasoning in small bowl. Add to cucumber/grape mixture and mix well. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before serving.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 cup (70 calories, 1 gram fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 400 mg sodium)*

# Garlic

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Garlic is an annual normally planted in October or six weeks before the ground freezes and is harvested 9 months later, often in July.
- \* Garlic thrives in rich, well drained, composted soil.
- \* Hardneck garlic produces a green "scape" or flower stalk that is also edible. Scapes should be removed in spring, giving the garlic bulbs more energy.
- \* Softneck varieties mature sooner and are great for braiding.
- \* There is a positive correlation between the size of the bulb planted and the size of the bulb harvested.
- \* Separate cloves just prior to planting. Plant cloves with growing tip up, 4-6" apart. Cover with 1-2" of soil. Space rows 12-18" apart.
- \* Keep soil well weeded.
- \* Garlic is normally harvested after the stalks turn brown and fall over.
- \* It is important to let garlic cure after harvest. Spread the harvested garlic heads or bulbs on newspapers or wire racks out of direct sunlight in a well-ventilated place to cure for 2 to 3 weeks or until skins are papery and dry.



## ~ Purchase ~

- \* New York State garlic is becoming quite popular due to the superb taste produced from the types of soil found in the central New York area.
- \* Choose garlic that is plump, dry and firm with tight skins.

## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* **Garlic** is low in calories, fat free, and sodium free. The pungent flavor of garlic is caused by a chemical reaction that occurs when the garlic cells are broken. This chemical reaction cannot occur after garlic is cooked, which is why roasted garlic is sweet rather than pungent.
- \* **Peeling garlic:** If the garlic is going to be chopped or sliced, the skin can be removed by pressing the clove with the flat side of a knife until the clove and skin crack. The skin can then be easily removed.
- \* **Baked garlic:** Preheat oven to 350°F. Peel away the outer layers of the garlic bulb skin, leaving the skins of the individual cloves intact. Using a knife, cut off 1/4 to 1/2" of the top of cloves, exposing the individual cloves of garlic. Lightly coat with vegetable or olive oil. Place each head of garlic in a piece of aluminum foil and fold over. Bake for about 30 minutes until soft.
- \* **Grilled garlic:** Peel outer wrappers of a bulb of garlic until one or two wrappers still cover the cloves. Drizzle olive oil on the bulbs and wrap in aluminum foil. Place on center rack of the grill and slow roast for 45 minutes.

**Garlic Bruschetta:** Combine 4 minced garlic cloves, 2-3 chopped tomatoes, basil leaves, oregano, and olive oil. Spread on sliced, toasted, crusty bread.

**Garlic Salsa:** Make a salsa with mashed roasted garlic, diced red pepper, green onion, cilantro, a jalapeno pepper and olive oil. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

**Garlic Sauce:** Top whole wheat pasta with a combination of olive oil, basil, and sautéed garlic for a heart-healthy sauce.

**Garlic Hummus:** Combine roasted garlic cloves with chickpeas, lemon juice, olive oil, and dill for a rustic hummus spread. Serve with assorted vegetables.

**Garlic Marinade:** Low-fat Italian dressing, Worcestershire sauce, and minced garlic makes a marinade that complements steak, shrimp, or chicken.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Garlic should be stored in a cool, dark place, but not in the refrigerator in well-ventilated containers like mesh bags. It can be kept for several weeks or months.
- \* Canning of garlic is not recommended. Garlic is a low-acid vegetable that requires a pressure canner to be properly processed.
- \* Freezing garlic: Chop the garlic, wrap it tightly in a plastic freezer bag or in plastic wrap, and freeze. To use, grate or break off the amount needed.
- \* Do NOT store garlic in oil at room temperature.

### Garlic Pesto Spread

2 cups fresh basil leaves, slightly packed  
4 garlic cloves  
1/2 cup walnuts (or pine nuts)  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 cup grated Parmesan or a mixture of Parmesan and Romano cheeses  
salt and pepper to taste

In a food processor or blender, combine garlic, walnuts and basil; process until finely chopped. Add cheese and olive oil; process until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.



For long term storage, freeze in ice cube trays, and store pesto spread cubes in the freezer for up to six months (quality will deteriorate after this time).

Try using garlic "scapes" in this recipe for a little stronger garlic flavor.

*Yield: 16 servings; serving size 1 Tablespoon (110 calories, 11 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 grams fiber, 75 mg sodium)*

## Garlicky Green Beans

1 pound fresh green beans (3 cups)  
1/2 cup water  
2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced  
3 Tablespoons butter or canola oil  
1/8 teaspoon salt (optional)  
pinch of pepper

Wash and trim green beans; cut into pieces, if desired. In a saucepan, bring beans and water to a boil; reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook for 8-10 minutes or until beans are crisp-tender; drain and set aside. In a large skillet, sauté garlic in butter until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Add beans, salt and pepper; heat through.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (80 calories, 6 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 gram fiber, 50 mg sodium)*

## Garlic Mashed Potatoes

6 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered  
4 to 5 garlic cloves, peeled  
5 cups of water  
2 Tablespoons olive or vegetable oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
pinch of pepper

In a medium saucepan, bring potatoes, garlic and water to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook for 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Drain, reserving 2/3 cup cooking liquid. Mash the potatoes. Add oil, pepper, reserved liquid, and salt (if desired). Stir until smooth.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (150 calories, 4 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 0 mg sodium)*

# Green Beans

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* If your garden is small, consider planting pole beans. Pole beans yield 2-3x's more than bush beans do from the same space and are easier to harvest. Both beans have the same growing requirements but pole beans need 5-8' tall supports to grow vertically.
- \* Beans are easy to grow annuals and must be planted yearly.
- \* Pole beans can grow from 5-10 feet tall and spread 1-2 feet wide.
- \* Grow green bean plants from seed but do not start seeds indoors. Beans do not like to be transplanted.
- \* Seeds germinate when soil temperatures reach above 60°F.
- \* Plant in spring when all danger of frost has passed.
- \* When planting pole beans, construct support for them to grow up before planting bean seeds so as not to damage roots.
- \* Plant bean seeds 1" deep and 3" apart.
- \* Do not use nitrogen fertilizers.
- \* If beans were planted in one area, do not plant them in the same area for three years to decrease the chance of disease.
- \* Harvest beans frequently to encourage more beans to grow.



## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Local bean harvest begins in mid June and continues until the first frost.
- \* Look for a crisp bean that snaps easily between your fingers. They should be firm and slender with a fresh, vivid color and a velvety feel. Look for a long, thin bean, one that doesn't show much bulging around the growing seed.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Green beans are good sources of folate. They are fat free, saturated fat free; sodium free; low calorie; and a good source of fiber.
- \* Beans allowed to mature to dried seeds are high in protein and carbohydrates in the form of starch.
- \* Green beans don't only come in green. You can find yellow, red, and purple beans too.
- \* Fresh beans can be thought of in two broad categories: those with edible pods (Chinese long beans, Italian green beans, purple wax beans, scarlet runner beans and snap beans) and those that are shelled (such as lima beans, soy beans, fava beans and other "shell" beans).
- \* Rinse beans in cold water just before preparing. Do not wash until you are ready to cook.
- \* Before cooking beans, the bean tips should be trimmed or "snapped" from the beans.
- \* To minimize nutrient loss for beans as well as most vegetables, keep the amount of water used in cooking to a minimum
- \* A variety of cooking methods are well-suited to beans such as steaming, simmering, microwaving, or sautéing until brighter in color and tender.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* The best way to store fresh beans is for short periods of time (up to one week) in plastic bags in the refrigerator.
- \* Do not rinse beans before storing in the refrigerator.
- \* Beans can be frozen for longer periods of time by blanching first in boiling water for 3 minutes. Cool in ice water bath to stop cooking process. Drain and pack in freezer-safe bags or containers.



## Green Beans with Sweet Potatoes

2 sweet potatoes, cut into chunks (approximately 3 cups)

1 onion, sliced

1 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

dash ground black pepper

1-3/4 cups cooked green beans

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil

2 Tablespoons lemon juice (or yellow mustard)

In a medium pot, add potatoes, onion, broth, garlic powder and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add green beans, stir gently. Heat on low for 5 minutes or until beans are heated through. Remove from heat. Drizzle with oil and lemon juice, if desired, serve.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (50 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 25 mg sodium)*



## Lemony Green Beans

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces (4 cups)
- 1-1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)

Steam green beans, covered, 5 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and return to pan.

Add juice, oil, pepper, and salt (if desired); toss to coat. Serve immediately.

*Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (25 calories, 0.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 0 mg sodium)*

## Bean Salad

- 1-14.5-15.5 ounce can, (2 cups) each green, wax, and kidney beans (low-sodium, rinsed and drained)\*
- 1 large diced red onion
- 1/2-3/4 cup low-fat Italian dressing
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, if desired

Put beans and onion in bowl. Pour dressing over beans. Refrigerate several hours or overnight, if possible. Stir a couple of times before serving.

\*Can also use fresh beans or cooked dried beans like chickpeas (garbanzo beans).

*Yield: 14 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (60 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 4 grams fiber, 170 mg sodium)*

# Peppers

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Plant peppers in full sun. Peppers need at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- \* If you purchase pepper plants, look for sturdy, short, dark green plants.
- \* Pepper plants are annuals. (They need to be planted each year.)
- \* If sowing seeds indoors, start 6-8 weeks before transplanting outside. Seeds germinate best at 75-90°F.
- \* Plant seedlings outside when nighttime temperatures are consistently above 45°F.
- \* Peppers grow best in well drained, fertile soil.
- \* To reduce root disease risk, don't plant on soil that has recently grown peppers, potatoes, tomatoes or eggplant for at least two years.
- \* Fruiting can be a challenge in northern areas of New York. Black row covers can help extend growing season in cold areas.
- \* Green bell peppers turn red when fully ripe.
- \* Harvest peppers before frost. Frost will kill your peppers.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Peppers become available in New York State beginning in July.
- \* Select firm, glossy peppers with taut, unwrinkled skin and fresh, green stems.
- \* Peppers should feel heavy for their size.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Pepper varieties can be red, green, yellow, orange, purple and brown. Colorful bell peppers represent the mature version of the green bell pepper. Peppers are highly nutritious. Sweet peppers are high in vitamins A & C and B-complex.
- \* Cut peppers into rings, strips, or dice. They make a colorful, healthy addition to salads, stir fries, soups and stews; or serve raw plain or with dip or hummus.
- \* Rinse peppers before preparing. Rub briskly under clean running water. Seeds of sweet peppers may be bitter, so remove.
- \* Hot pepper seeds and the white inside flesh is where most of the "heat" is concentrated; so remove these parts. Always wear gloves when touching hot peppers!
- \* Wash hands with warm, soapy water if exposed to hot peppers. Do not touch your face or eyes!



## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Store sweet peppers unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- \* Green peppers keep longer than ripe, colored peppers. Try to use within a week.
- \* Peppers with soft spots should be used immediately.
- \* Hot peppers should be stored wrapped in paper towels rather than in a plastic bag. Moisture causes them to decay quickly.
- \* Hot peppers will keep well for several weeks in the refrigerator.

## Quick Quesadillas

non-stick cooking spray (or 1 Tablespoon oil)

1-1/2 cups bell pepper slices (red, green, orange and/or yellow)

1/2 cup sliced onion

1 clove garlic, minced

4 whole wheat tortillas

4 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese (1 cup)

Spray medium skillet with cooking spray or add one Tablespoon of vegetable oil. Sauté onions and peppers until softened. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute more.

Top each tortilla with 1/4 of the vegetables and one ounce of the cheese. Fold each tortilla in half. Place tortillas, two at a time, in fry pan and crisp on both sides, until cheese is melted. Serve.

*Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1 quesadilla (140 calories, 2.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 grams fiber, 350 mg sodium)*

## Mini Veggie Pizza

5 English muffins (or bagels)

1 small zucchini, grated

1 green or red bell pepper, finely chopped

8-ounce package part-skim mozzarella cheese, grated

8-ounce can of tomato sauce

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon dried basil

Slice English muffins in half. Place them on a baking sheet, and toast lightly in oven or toaster oven.

Grate zucchini. Chop pepper into small pieces. Grate mozzarella cheese.

Top each muffin in half with 1 tablespoon of tomato sauce. Add grated zucchini, chopped pepper, and grated cheese. Sprinkle with oregano and basil. Broil in oven until cheese is melted (about 2 minutes).

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1 mini pizza (140 calories, 5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 390 mg sodium)*

# Vegetable Stuffed Peppers

- 6 medium green bell peppers
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1-3 garlic cloves, minced (optional)
- 1-1/2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup each cooked corn and green beans

Wash peppers. Cut tops off; remove seeds. Heat vegetable oil; sauté onion and garlic. In large bowl, mix rice, carrots, corn, and green beans. Add sautéed onion and garlic; mix thoroughly.

Fill each pepper with 1 cup of vegetable/rice mixture.

Lightly spray 9"X13" casserole dish. Place filled peppers in dish, upright. Pour 4 cups spaghetti sauce over peppers. Cover loosely with foil. Bake at 350°F for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until peppers are fork tender.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 pepper with sauce (300 calories, 8 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 10 grams fiber, 75 mg sodium)*



# Potatoes

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Plant in full sun. Potatoes need at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily. Do not plant seed potatoes until soil reaches 40°F.
- \* Potatoes prefer well drained, light, deep, loose soil high in organic matter (minerals).
- \* Unlike most vegetables, potatoes grow best in acidic soils with pH 4.8 to 5.5. Use a fertilizer low in nitrogen and high in phosphorus like bone meal.
- \* Grow potatoes by planting "eyes" cut from mature potato, tubers from the previous season or seed potatoes.
- \* Cut seed potatoes into chunks 1 inch or larger. Each chunk will need one or more "eyes". Plant seed potatoes with "eyes" facing up 8-12" apart.
- \* Do not plant where you have grown potatoes, tomatoes, peppers or eggplant in the past 2 years.
- \* When potato plants are 6-8 inches tall, "hill" them by covering with loose soil about 1 inch below lower leaves. Repeat hilling process in 2-3 weeks.
- \* Hilling prevents sun exposure on potatoes which will turn the skins green.
- \* When potato plants "vines" above ground are green, potatoes are still growing. When above ground vines lie down and die, potatoes below ground are ready to harvest.
- \* Potatoes need at least 1 inch of water per week. Mulching helps retain soil moisture. Avoid wetting plant foliage when watering to help prevent blight.
- \* Potatoes should be left in ground about 2 weeks after vines have died to allow skins to set which increases storage ability.
- \* If you have heavy, clay soil consider planting potatoes in raised beds with loose soil.





## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Local potatoes are available in markets from July to October. Look for smooth, firm potatoes. Avoid potatoes with sprouts, soft spots or green color.

*Some potato varieties include:*

**Russet:** lots of starch causes the flesh to separate, creating a fluffy texture when baked.

**Red-Skinned:** Less starch helps them keep their shape, making for creamy and moist potato salad.

**Yukon Gold:** A versatile potato with a buttery flavor perfect for any use.

## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Potatoes contain potassium, Vitamin C, fiber, magnesium, and phosphorus.
- \* Green potatoes contain a chemical, solanine, which is toxic in large amounts. Solanine is created when potatoes are exposed to sunlight or artificial light in storage.
- \* Scrub potatoes in cold water with a vegetable brush to remove dirt. Use potatoes with or without peeling.
- \* Depending on the variety of potato, you may enjoy them by baking, boiling, microwaving, steaming, grilling, and mashing.
- \* Potatoes are an excellent addition to soups, stews, frittatas, and stir-fry's.
- \* To bake in a microwave oven, pierce 2 potatoes with a fork, then cook on high for about 7 minutes.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Store potatoes in a dry location and at the lowest temperature possible without freezing. A cool, dark, dry cabinet is ideal. Do not refrigerate. Exposure to light may turn skins green and inedible.
- \* Do not store apples and potatoes together. Apples will turn mushy.

## Potato Pancakes

- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 Tablespoon milk
- 1 Tablespoon flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 3 large potatoes, peeled

In a bowl, mix together eggs, milk, flour, and salt, if desired. Grate potatoes into the bowl and mix. You may need to add additional flour for desired consistency. Drop onto lightly-oiled griddle. Cook over medium heat 5 minutes on each side until potatoes are tender and browned. Serve hot with applesauce, if desired.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 pancake (170 calories, 2 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 4 gram fiber, 35 mg sodium)*

## Potato Corn Soup

- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 3 cups diced potatoes
- 2 cups low sodium broth
- 1 cup low fat milk
- 1-1/2 cups corn
- salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onions and cook until soft. Add potatoes, broth and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir until smooth. Use the back of a spoon or fork to mash some of the potatoes. Add milk and corn. Reheat for 10 minutes. Serve hot. Refrigerate leftovers.

*Yield: 5 servings; serving size 1 cup (190 calories, 4 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 grams fiber, 85 mg sodium)*

# Potato Salad Supreme

- 6 medium potatoes
- 3 medium celery stalks, diced
- 2 medium carrots, peeled & diced
- 1/2 small mild onion, diced
- 1/2 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 2 Tablespoons reduced calorie mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- salt and pepper to taste

Fill saucepan half full of water; bring to a boil. Peel potatoes (optional) and cut into 3/4-inch chunks. Add to boiling water and cook until tender (about 10 minutes). In small bowl, mix together yogurt, mayonnaise, and mustard.

When potatoes are done, drain them and place them in a large bowl. Add celery, carrots, and onion and stir together. Add yogurt mixture to potato mixture and mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate to blend flavors.

*Yield: 12 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (70 calories, 1 gram fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 50 mg sodium)*



# Summer Squash & Zucchini

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Squash/zucchini plants enjoy full sun and prefer well drained, fertile, loose soil high in organic matter.
- \* Seeds must be planted each year - they are an annual plant.
- \* Plants grow 1-3 feet tall and spread from 2-4 feet.
- \* Plant seeds when soil temperature reaches 65°F or more. Squash/zucchini like warm soil and are very sensitive to frost and cool soil.
- \* Plant seeds 1/2-1" deep in small hills. Plant 4-5 seeds per hill. Space hills 3-4 feet apart.
- \* When plants are 2-3" tall thin plants to 2-3 per hill.
- \* If planting in rows, space plants 12-24" apart.
- \* Mulching around plants helps retain moisture and suppress weeds.
- \* Squash/zucchini require bee and insect activity for successful pollination. Poor fruit set is often the result of poor pollination.
- \* Squash/zucchini can be picked small or large. In general, summer squash are most tender and flavorful when very young.
- \* If picked often, plants will produce up until frost.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Summer squash and zucchini come in a variety of shapes and sizes.
- \* Available from July-October.
- \* Look for small, glossy, young squash that are heavy for their size.
- \* Skins should be tender and not wrinkled, withered or soft.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* 1/2 cup serving of cooked summer squash/zucchini contains about 20 calories, no fat, and is a good source of fiber.
- \* Summer squash/zucchini contains potassium, Vitamin A and Vitamin C.
- \* Squash/zucchini can be prepared using a variety of cooking techniques including steaming, boiling, grilling, stuffing, barbecuing and microwaving. They also can be incorporated into baking mixes such as breads, cookies and muffins.
- \* Scrub squash and zucchini gently with cold water. Cut off both ends then slice, chop, grate or prepare following your favorite recipe.
- \* Squash and zucchini may be enjoyed raw, or cooked in your favorite soup, salad, stir fry, main dish or dessert.
- \* Squash flowers are also edible and are often prepared by stuffing.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Store fresh summer squash and zucchini in the refrigerator for up to five days.
- \* To freeze: Wash and cut in 1/2" slices. Blanch in boiling water 3 minutes. Cool immediately in ice water bath. Store in freezer zip top bags with air removed leaving 1/2" headspace.
- \* Grated zucchini (for baking): Wash and grate. Store in freezer bags with air removed in amounts needed for favorite recipes.

## Warm Zucchini Salad

- 1 spray cooking spray
- 1 zucchini, sliced thin (3 cups)
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced (1 cup)
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning (oregano, basil, marjoram)
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Spray nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat to medium-high. Add vegetables, cover and cook briefly (2-3 minutes) until tender but slightly crisp. Add seasoning and balsamic vinegar. Serve warm.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (10 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 0 grams fiber, 10 mg sodium)*

## Summer Pasta

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil or cooking spray

1 yellow squash, thinly sliced

1 zucchini, thinly sliced

1 large onion, thinly sliced

1/2 -1 cup salsa

2 cups pasta, cooked, drained

Parmesan cheese (optional)

Spray large skillet with cooking spray or add oil. Stir fry squashes and onion until tender. Add salsa. Heat until salsa is hot. Pour over cooked pasta and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if desired.

*Yield: 16 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (40 calories, 1 gram fat, 0 grams trans fat, <1 gram fiber, 50 mg sodium)*

## Zucchini Bran Muffins

2 cups bran cereal (flakes)

1 cup shredded zucchini

3/4 cup milk (low fat)

1 egg

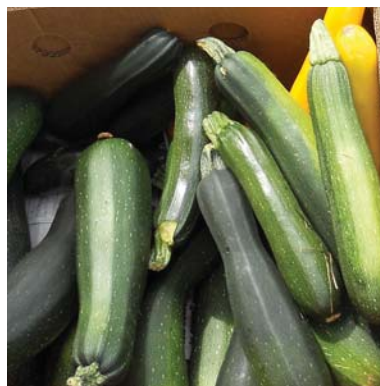
1/2 cup sugar

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1-1/2 cups flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon each ginger and cinnamon



Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl, mix together bran cereal, zucchini, milk, egg, oil, and sugar. Set aside. Sift together flour, baking powder, and spices and then add to bran mixture. Stir until just moistened. Drop batter into 12 lightly oiled muffin pans about 3/4 full. Bake for 30 minutes or until muffins are brown on top and firm to the touch.

*Yield: 12 servings; serving size 1 muffin (180 calories, 7 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 150 mg sodium)*

## **Zucchini Corn Boats**

6 small (about 8 inch) or 3 medium (about 12 inch) zucchini  
6 ears of corn  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 Tablespoon olive or vegetable oil  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1/2 cup part skim mozzarella cheese, shredded

Preheat oven to 350°F. To form "boats" out of the zucchini, lay zucchini on a cutting board and slice off the top third, lengthwise. Hollow out the zucchini by using a spoon or melon baller to scoop out the inner seeds and pulp of the zucchini. Chop the top zucchini slice and pulp. Prepare corn by holding each cob upright and slicing off the kernels.

Heat the oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Add onion and cook for five minutes; add chopped zucchini, corn kernels and pepper. Cook an additional 10 minutes or until zucchini is soft. Place zucchini boats in a baking dish. Fill boats with chopped zucchini, corn, and onion mixture. If there is extra zucchini corn mixture, put it in the baking dish along with the boats, or save it for another meal. Top the zucchini corn boats with the shredded cheese. Bake for 30-35 minutes.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1 "boat" (160 calories, 6 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 3 grams fiber, 65 mg sodium)*

# Sweet Corn

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Corn is an annual plant. Seeds must be planted each year.
- \* Corn requires rich, fertile, consistently moist soil. Corn does not like cold, wet soil. Plant when soil temperature reaches 60-85°F. You may need to fertilize several times per season if your plants are nutrient deficient. Signs of nutrient deficiency:
  - Purple tinted leaves: phosphorus deficiency.
  - Pale green leaves: nitrogen deficiency.
- \* Because corn is wind pollinated, plant individual varieties in blocks of 4 rows. (Corn varieties need to be separated by at least 1/2 mile to prevent cross pollination.)
- \* Space rows 24-30" apart. Sow seeds every 4". Seeds emerge in 7-14 days. For continuous harvest, make additional plantings three weeks apart until mid-summer.
- \* When seedlings are 4-5" tall, thin plants to 8-12" apart.
- \* Mulch around plants to help suppress weeds and to keep moisture in soil.
- \* Harvest corn when kernels are full and if pricked, release a "milky" liquid rather than a "clear" liquid. Drying and browning of the ear silk is a good indicator of readiness.
- \* After harvesting, ears should be cooled as quickly as possible and stored at 34°F.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* In New York, fresh corn is usually available starting in July.
- \* Choose ears with green husks, fresh silks and tight rows of milky kernels.
- \* Sweet corn types vary in color and sugar levels.
- \* Sweet corn begins to lose sweetness just after being picked because sugar is converted to starch. Eat freshly picked corn as soon as possible for best quality.
- \* Keep fresh corn (with husk on) in a bag in refrigerator until ready to husk, cook, and eat. Use within 1-2 days.



## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Corn is low in fat, saturated fat free, sodium-free, and a good source of fiber and starch.
- \* Add corn to soup, whether it's chili or chowder, to enhance the soup's hardness.
- \* Add corn kernels and diced tomatoes to guacamole or salsa.
- \* For a little different texture, add corn to your cornbread or corn muffins.
- \* Make a corn relish to serve as a side dish or salad by combining chopped vegetables and beans mixed with vinaigrette, corn, and chopped tomatoes.
- \* Microwaving fresh corn: Husk corn, remove silk and wash. Wrap in plastic wrap or place in tightly covered dish with 1/4 cup water. Microwave on high: one ear: 2-5 minutes; two ears 4-10 minutes. Turn over and rearrange half way through cooking time. Let stand 5 minutes.
- \* Grilling fresh corn: Open husk but do not remove leaves. Remove silk and wash the kernels. Soak the un-husked corn in water for 1-2 hours. Shake off excess water and place on grill Or, husk the corn, wash and wrap in foil before grilling. Grill corn 20 minutes or until desired tenderness, turning frequently.
- \* Sprinkle your corn-on-the-cob with a little Parmesan cheese or some of your favorite herbs and spices, such as chili powder, parsley, and chives.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* To freeze corn, preserve within 2-6 hours after picking for the best quality. In boiling water, blanch small ears 7 minutes, medium ears 9 minutes, and large ears 11 minutes. Cool immediately in ice water bath. Cut kernels off cob and freeze in freezer bags or containers. Remove air in bags and stack in freezer.
- \* Corn can NOT be safely canned in a hot water bath canner. Corn must be processed in a pressure canner.

## Corn Salad

- 4 ears of corn (cooked; kernels cut off of cob to make about 2 cups)\*
- 1 large red pepper, chopped
- 2 large green peppers, chopped
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 8 ounces low-fat Monterey Jack cheese, diced
- 1/4 cup Italian dressing
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)
- Taco seasoning to taste (optional)

Mix all ingredients. Serve warm or cold.

\*Canned or frozen corn can be substituted.

*Yield: 12 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (80 calories, 3 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 gram fiber, 95 mg sodium)*

## Quick Corn Chowder

Place the following in a saucepan:

- 2 cups diced potatoes
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup water

Cook until potatoes are tender.

Add:

- 1-1/2 cups milk
- 1-16 ounce can corn or 2 cups cooked corn (frozen or fresh cut off cob)

Heat and serve; season as desired.

*Yield: 12 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (70 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 grams fiber, 20 mg sodium)*

## Corny Chili

2-15-ounce cans kidney or black beans

1 medium onion, chopped

1 Tablespoon vegetable oil

2 teaspoons chili powder

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1-15-ounce can diced tomatoes

2 Tablespoons tomato paste

1 10-ounce package frozen corn or corn kernels from 3 ears of fresh corn

8-ounce package low-fat cheddar cheese, grated

hot sauce (optional)

Place beans in a colander and rinse with water. Peel onion and chop into small pieces. Add onion and oil to saucepan. Cook over low heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in chili and garlic powder. Cook for 1 minute. Add beans, tomatoes, tomato paste and corn. Mix and simmer uncovered on medium low heat for about 15 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over individual servings and add hot sauce to taste.

*Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1 cup (250 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 12 grams fiber, 320 mg sodium)*



# Tomatoes

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Plant in full sun. Tomatoes need at least 8 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- \* If you purchase tomato plants, look for sturdy, short, dark green plants.
- \* It is estimated that there are 25,000-40,000 varieties of tomatoes worldwide.
- \* Tomato plants are annuals (they need to be planted each year).
- \* Sow seeds indoors 6-8 weeks before transplanting outside. Seeds germinate best at 75-90°F.
- \* Plant seedlings outside when nighttime temperatures are consistently above 45°F.
- \* Seedlings grow best if planted deeper than they were planted in containers.
- \* To reduce root disease risk, don't plant on soil that has recently grown tomatoes, potatoes, peppers or eggplant for at least two years.
- \* Tomato plants need a consistent supply of moisture but do not tolerate waterlogged soils. Mulch around plants to help keep soil moist.
- \* Stake and tie or "cage" tall tomato varieties.
- \* Eliminate weeds around plant area to improve air circulation.
- \* Harvest tomatoes before frost. Frost will kill your tomatoes.
- \* Harvest almost ripe green tomatoes before frost to ripen indoors.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Select tomatoes with bright, shiny skins and firm flesh.
- \* Buy firm, fragrant, local tomatoes-picked vine ripe if possible.
- \* Tomatoes are available from July through September, or even earlier if produced in a greenhouse or with a plastic cover.

## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Tomatoes are low in fat; saturated fat free; have very low sodium; low calorie; high in Vitamin A and C, and are a good source of potassium and lycopene.
- \* Yellow tomatoes are not really any lower in acid than red; they contain more sugar and, therefore, have a sweeter taste.
- \* Tomatoes are not vegetables, but are fruit (or more accurately, berries).
- \* Store at room temperature away from direct sunlight, for use within 1 week after ripe. Refrigerate only if you can't use them before they spoil.
- \* To ripen green tomatoes, place on a rack so that fruits are not touching and set in a warm location 65-70°F away from sunlight. To slow ripening of green tomatoes, store in a cooler location 50-55°F.
- \* Wash tomatoes before preparing. Rub briskly under clean running water.
- \* Remove any black spots or bruises.
- \* It's best to peel and/or cut tomatoes just before use.



**Healthy Tomato Vinaigrette:** In a blender, combine a chopped tomato, 2 Tablespoons of vinegar (white wine or balsamic), 1 Tablespoon olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard, and your favorite herbs (basil, thyme etc). Enjoy.

**Quick Tomato Salad:** Quarter tomatoes and marinate with onion in your favorite low-fat vinaigrette. Add some sliced cucumber for some extra crunch.

**Stuffed Tomato:** Stuff a tomato with low-fat cottage cheese or with beans, tuna, shrimp, or chicken salad. Use the pulp as part of the salad.

**Stewed Tomato Side Dish:** Sauté 1 small diced onion in 1 Tablespoon olive oil. Add coarsely chopped, peeled tomatoes (about 6); mix in dried or chopped fresh basil and a dash of salt and pepper; simmer for 5 minutes.

**Tangy Salsa:** Mix together chopped fresh tomatoes, finely chopped jalapeno peppers, chopped cucumber, 1 small onion, chopped cilantro, and lime juice.

**Baked Tomato Side Dish:** Slice tomatoes about 1/2-inch thick. Sprinkle with seasoned breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Bake at 350°F until tomatoes are almost soft.

**Raw Tomato Topping:** Slice fresh tomatoes and top your pizza.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Canning tomatoes: To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice per quart. Process in hot water bath canner 35 minutes for pints or 45 minutes for quarts. Use only disease-free, preferably vine-ripened, firm fruit. Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines.
- \* Freezing tomatoes: Select firm, ripe tomatoes. Wash and dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to remove skins. Core and peel. Freeze whole or in pieces. Pack into containers. Seal and freeze. Use only for cooking since tomatoes will not be solid when thawed.

## No-Cook Fresh Tomato Sauce

- 1-1/2 pounds plum tomatoes, chopped (approximately 5 cups)
- 1/3 cup diced fresh part-skim mozzarella (optional)
- 3 Tablespoons reduced fat Italian dressing
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- ground black pepper, to taste

Combine tomatoes, mozzarella, Italian dressing and garlic. Add Italian seasoning and pepper, to taste. Let stand to allow tomatoes to release their juices. Serve over hot pasta. Refrigerate leftovers.

Variations: Serve over cooked pasta as a pasta salad, or spoon over garlic toast for an appetizer. Also great in meatloaf.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (15 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 65 mg sodium)*

## Easy Fresh Tomato Salsa

- 3 tomatoes, chopped (1 pound)
- 1/2 cup onion, sweet or regular, finely diced
- 1 Serrano chili pepper, finely chopped, or any hot pepper of your choice (2-3 Tablespoons)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 clove garlic, minced (3/4 teaspoon)

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Chill for an hour; serve with chips or as a topping to pasta.

*Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (20 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 0 mg sodium)*



# Winter Squash

## Plant ~ Grow

- \* Winter squash are easy to grow if you have the room. Plant bush varieties if you have less space.
- \* Squash are annuals and must be planted each year.
- \* Squash plants can spread from 3-15 feet or grow 2-3 feet vertically if trellised.
- \* Squash plants prefer full sun and fertile, well drained soil.
- \* Squash can be planted by direct seeding outdoors or by transplanting seedlings.
- \* Wait until soil reaches at least 65 F if planting seeds outdoors. Seeds will not germinate in cold soil.
- \* Plant seeds 1" deep in hills with 4-5 seeds per hill or plant 6-12" apart in rows that are 4-8' apart.
- \* When plants are 2-3" tall, thin plants so they are 2-3 per hill or one plant per 18" if planted in a row.
- \* Use row covers to help prevent insect problems. Remove row covers when plants flower to allow pollination by insects.
- \* Mulching around plants helps retain moisture and suppresses weeds.
- \* Harvest mature squash before frost.

## ~ Purchase ~

- \* Winter Squash harvest begins in August and continues until frost.
- \* Winter squash come in an array of sizes, shapes and colors.
- \* No matter which variety of squash you choose, select a squash that feels heavy, has a firm, thick skin and the stem still attached. Avoid squash with cracks or cuts.





## ~ Enjoy ~

- \* Winter squash contain no fat and are low in sodium. Most are good sources of vitamin A and C, beta carotene, fiber, riboflavin, potassium, foliate and iron.
- \* There are many different varieties, each unique in flavor and texture. Common varieties include butternut, acorn, Hubbard and spaghetti squash. Pumpkins are another variety of winter squash.
- \* Squash can be baked, roasted, stuffed, steamed, pureed, sautéed, grilled or microwaved.
- \* Wash just before preparing.
- \* To bake: cut squash in half; remove seeds (save seeds to roast, see instructions below). Place squash cut side down in a pan. Add a little bit of water to the pan to help prevent scorching. Bake in oven at 375°F until a fork can easily pierce the flesh. Serve as is or scoop out flesh.
- \* To roast seeds: separate seeds from flesh; pat dry; sprinkle with salt and herbs, if desired; and roast on a lightly-oiled baking sheet at 350°F in oven until brown.
- \* Squash flowers are edible and often prepared by stuffing.

## ~ Preserve ~

- \* Store winter squash with stems attached after letting any cuts or wet wounds heal (squash should be dry and may form something like a scab over wounds where picked).
- \* Do not refrigerate winter squash. Store winter squash out of direct light, and at a cool stable temperature. Different varieties store for different lengths of time, with Hubbard, kabocha, and butternuts lasting the longest and acorns and butternuts the shortest.
- \* Freezing Squash: Cook squash; mash flesh; cool and freeze in freezer-safe bags or containers.

## Butternut Squash Soup

2 Tablespoons butter  
1 onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
3 carrots, diced  
2 celery stalks, diced  
1 potato, peeled and diced  
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced  
3 (14.5 ounce) cans low sodium chicken broth  
1/4 cup honey  
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed

In a large pot, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in onions and garlic; cook and stir until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add carrots and celery; cook and stir until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in potatoes, squash, chicken broth, honey and thyme. Bring mixture to boil; reduce heat and simmer 30 to 45 minutes, until vegetables are tender. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Transfer mixture to blender or food processor; process until smooth. Return pureed soup to pot. Season to taste. Heat until hot; and serve.

*Yield: 10 servings; serving size 1 cup, (120 calories, 3.5 grams fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 170 mg sodium)*

## Squash Apple Casserole

2-1/2 cups fresh winter squash, cut into 1/2-inch slices  
1-1/2 cups apples, pared and cut into 1/2-inch slices  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/4 cup brown sugar

Lightly spray 8X8" pan. Alternate layers of squash and apples, ending with apples on top layer. Mix spices and sugar and sprinkle over top. Cover pan with aluminum foil and bake in 350°F oven for approximately 45 - 60 minutes, until squash is tender. Remove foil and bake another 10 - 15 minutes to remove any excess liquid that might have accumulated. Cool slightly before serving.

*Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1/2 cup, (51 calories, 0 grams fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium)*

## Apple Filled Squash

2 acorn, buttercup or butternut squash

2 large apples, peeled, cored and chopped

2-1/2 Tablespoons brown sugar

2-1/2 Tablespoons melted butter

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Dash of ground cloves (or substitute 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice for cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut squash in half and remove seeds. Place in baking dish cut side down in about 1 inch of water. Bake for 20 minutes. While squash is cooking, mix apple with other ingredients. Remove squash from oven, turn squash cut side up, and fill with apple mixture. Continue to bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until tender.

*Yield: 4 servings; serving size 1/2 filled squash (240 calories, 8 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 5 grams fiber, 70 mg sodium)*



# Websites

*Cornell University Home Garden Websites:*

**General gardening:** [www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/](http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/)

*Websites for Healthy Eating:*

**USDA:** [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

*Food Preservation Websites:*

**National Center for Home Food Preservation:**

[www.homefoodpreservation.com](http://www.homefoodpreservation.com)

**CCE Herkimer County Food Preservation Resources:**

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/food-preservation-resources/>

*Composting Resources:*

**Cornell Waste Management Institute:** [http://](http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm)

[cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm](http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/resources.htm)

## Herkimer County Farmers' Markets

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/local-farmers-markets/>



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Herkimer County  
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A New York State Department of Health funded Rural Health Network

<https://www.healthnetinc.org/>

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