

Super Veggies

By **Kris Williams, MS, RD, LD** Master Gardeners of Greene County

Kris is the Dietetic Internship Director & Associate Professor at Cox College. She's a regular volunteer in the Kitchen Garden at the Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park. We're grateful to have her as part of our team!

According to the **Missouri Vegetable Planting Calendar**, published by the University of Missouri Extension, it is possible to begin planting some vegetable varieties in mid to late March. In looking at the schedule, the cruciferous family seemed to jump out and grab my attention.

Cruciferous or Brassica

vegetables are named because they come from plants in the family known to botanists as *Cruciferae* or *Brassicaceae*. Many commonly consumed cruciferous vegetables come from the Brassica genus, including broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, kohlrabi, mustard, rutabaga, turnips, bok choy, and Chinese cabbage. Arugula, horse radish, radish, wasabi, and watercress are also cruciferous vegetables. These super veggies contain phytochemicals, vitamins and minerals, and fiber that are important to your health. (www.webmd.com/hw-popup/vitamins-and-their-functions-and-sources).

Vegetables in general are arguably the most health-promoting of all the food groups. One of the big reasons to eat plenty of cruciferous vegetables is that they may help to lower your risk of getting cancer. (www.webmd.com/cancer). According to the *American Institute for Cancer*, compounds in these veggies have shown the ability to stop the growth of cancer cells in the breast, endometrium, lung, colon, liver, and cervix (www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/human-anatomy-the-liver).

They may also help to protect against cardiovascular disease by reducing markers of inflammation. Given that inflammation has been linked recently with many chronic diseases, the health benefits of consuming these veggies may be even greater than we know.

It's best to eat these veggies raw or only lightly steamed to retain the phytochemicals that make cruciferous vegetables special in terms of health. As you likely already know, raw vegetables are high in fiber and low in fat and calories. And vegetables that can be eaten raw retain the maximum amount of nutrients. In general, cooking vegetables kills bacteria, renders certain vegetables digestible,

enhances taste, texture, and aroma – and, in the process, loses some of the vitamins and minerals. To retain the most nutrients, cook your vegetables in the least amount of water and for the shortest period of time possible. Microwaving is one of the best methods, as it's quick and requires little to no water.

A potential problem for some of you is the fact that these nutrition-packed foods are among the strongest tasting & smelling vegetables. Shorter cooking times tame the bitter taste and odor. Other ideas to cut the bitterness include the following; add a little olive oil (or other fat) when stir-frying or sauteing; add something salty or sour (like a drizzle of light soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, lemon, or shredded Parmesan); or glaze the vegetables with something sweet (a small spoonful of honey or orange marmalade).

How many servings should you get?

Results of some epidemiological studies suggest that adults should aim for at least five weekly servings of cruciferous vegetables.

And—in the true spirit of being a Master Gardener, I recommend that you plant your own chemical free

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Vegan Carrot Broccoli & Bean Shoot Salad

- 3 C shredded carrots
- 2 C broccoli slaw or finely julienned broccoli stalks
- 2 C mung bean shoots
 - 1 large cucumber peeled, seeded and julienned
- 2 C (2 bunches) fresh cilantro / coriander chopped finely
 - 1 bunch of green onions sliced finely

To make the dressing:

- just over ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 3 T cold pressed sesame oil
- 2 T agave nectar
- 1 T apple cider vinegar
- 2 tsp wheat-free tamari
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- ½ tsp Celtic sea salt
- 2 T fresh minced serrano chilli depending on the heat
- 3 - 4 tsp freshly minced garlic

- 1) Toss all of the vegetables together with the cilantro.
- 2) Place all of the dressing ingredients except the chilli and garlic in your blender and pulse a few times until well combined.
- 3) Then stir in the garlic and chilli.
- 4) Pour the dressing over the salad and season to taste.
- 5) Garnish with sesame seeds or chopped raw nuts if desired. YUM!

– **Super Veggies** *continued from front*

(organic/naturally grown!) sources of these super veggies. So if you haven't already planned a space for these special foods, be sure and give them the space they deserve and get started!

References: Allsop KA, Miller JB: Honey revisited: A reappraisal of honey in pre-industrial diets. *Br J Nutr* 75:513–520,1996. Helbling A, Peter C, Berchtold E, Bogdanov S, Müller U: Allergy to honey: Relation to pollen and honey bee allergy. *Allergy* 47:41–49,1992. Khan FR, Ul Abadin Z, Rauf N. Honey: nutritional and medicinal value. *Int J Clin Pract* 2007;61:1705-7. Tyler, VE. *The Honest Herbal*, 3rd Ed., 1993. Pharmaceutical Products Press

New Book Releases for March 1, 2011

The No-Dig Garden Specialist: The Essential Guide to Growing Vegetables, Salads and Soft Fruit in Raised No-Dig Beds

by Alan Bridgewater 80 pages
ISBN: 1847737471, New Holland

For those without the time or stamina to spend hours maintaining a garden, well-known experts Alan and Gill Bridgewater offer an easy-care method with minimal digging and weeding. They show how to make raised beds, build up soil with mushroom compost, cover weeds with mulch, and protect plants with nets and plastic--all using organic methods whenever possible.

Organic Manifesto: How Organic Food Can Heal Our Planet, Feed the World, and Keep Us Safe

by Rodale Books 240 pages
ISBN: 1609611365, Rodale Books

Drawing on findings from leading health researchers as well as conversations with both chemical and organic farmers from coast to coast, Maria Rodale irrefutably outlines the unacceptably high cost of chemical farming on our health and our environment. She traces the genesis of chemical farming and the rise of the immense companies that profit from it, bringing to light the government's role in allowing such practices to flourish. She further explains that modern organic farming would not only help reverse climate change by reducing harmful carbon emissions and soil depletion, but would also improve the quality of the food we eat, reduce diseases from asthma to cancer, and ensure a better quality of life in farming communities nationwide.

For every parent wondering how best to safeguard the health and safety of her children; for every environmentalist in search of a solution to the worsening crisis that afflicts our land, air, and waters; for every shopper who questions whether it is worth it to pay more for organic, Maria Rodale offers straightforward answers and a single, definitive course of action: We must demand organic now.

Learn More About Growing Vegetables & Fruit!

Pruning Fruit Trees & Plants Workshop

Saturday, March 5 | 8:30 am-12 pm | FREE | Presentations followed by a field workshop on how to prune fruit trees and plants. Bring your pruning tools and dress for the weather! Dr. Martin Kaps, research pomologist, Susanne Howard, horticulture outreach advisor, and Randy Stout, field and maintenance supervisor in charge of pruning apples, peaches and grapes, will work with attendees and prune both tree fruits and small fruit crops. | Pavillion | To Register: contact Susanne Howard, SusanneHoward@MissouriState.edu or 417-547-7533.

Vegetable Growing Workshop

Saturday, March 12 | 8:30 am-12 pm | FREE | MGers and horticulturists from the State Fruit Experiment Station will work together to provide information on all aspects of vegetable growing. | Faurot Hall 101/102 | To Register: contact Pamela Mayer, PMayer@MissouriState.edu

Location: MSU Mountain Grove Fruit Experiment Station, 9740 Red Spring Rd, Mountain Grove, MO 65711



• **Discover the Benefits of Grafting**

Thursday, March 17 | 6 pm | \$15 (prepayment required)
Learn when, how and why to graft apple trees. Try your hand at grafting, and take home a grafted apple tree.

• **Grow Terrific Tomatoes!**

Thursday, April 28 | 6 pm | \$5.00 (registration required)
Basic tomato knowledge will give you the edge you need to grow the best tomatoes ever.

• **Meet The Three Sisters**

Thursday, May 19 | 6 pm | \$5.00 (registration required)
Corn, Beans, Squash. Learn what native forefathers knew about these plants and how to grow today's hybrids.

• **Manage Insects & Disease in Your Garden**

Thursday, June 16 | 6 pm | \$5.00 (registration required)
Learn to identify problems and the strategies of integrated pest management in your garden.

• **Plan Now for a Fall Harvest**

Thursday, July 21 | 6 pm | \$5.00 (registration required)
Extend the growing season and learn what and when to plant for a fall harvest.

All events are posted at the FOG Calendar:
www.swmogardens.com/fogcalendar.

Know of an event that isn't listed on the calendar? Click 'Submit Even't at the top and fill in the details!