

Nutrition Tidbits Garden Edition, gives gardening inspiration and recommendations, provides botanical facts and nutrition values of Arkansas Grown produce, as well as shares delicious recipes.



SPOTLIGHT

Helping Hands of Little Rock



We spoke with Gayle, the Executive Director at Helping Hands about how garden and farm connections have impacted clients.

The Centennial Garden at Arkansas Children's Hospital has been providing fresh produce 9-10 months out of the year for several years. Clients enjoy strawberries and watermelon in the summer months and greens in the cooler months. Due to COVID, there was a drop in produce from local farmers, but Gayle is hopeful to work with previous and new partners in 2021. Gayle shared a story about working at their mobile food pantry at Children's Hospital when a mother hopped out of her car and said, "I just have to give you a hug." The woman said that her daughter had been in the hospital for so long, and she had no idea what she was going to feed her family that night. She was so excited to have food to cook for her family. Gayle said, "There were many more stories like this one."

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Please feel free to contact us at 501-565-8121 if you have questions.

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What's Growing?



Nutrition facts:

Beets are a good source of folate and manganese. The folate and riboflavin in beets help make red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body. Manganese is an essential trace element that assists enzymes with womb healing, bone growth and healthy immune function. Beet greens are a good source of vitamin K, A and C. To get the most nutrients out of beets eat the stems, roots, and leaves.

Storage Tip:

Remove the leaves if attached to the root, leaving about an inch attached. Store the leaves in a bag for up to three days. Use them similarly to greens or in a salad. The root can be stored in a bag for up to 2 weeks. The root can be eaten raw, cooked, canned or pickled.

BEETS

Plant Facts:

Beets are part of the chenopodiace family and originated along the seacoast of the Mediterranean. They are closely related to Chard, but unlike chard all parts of the beet plant are edible. Beets prefer cooler seasons and can not handle extreme heat. Beets are often harvested in April and May in Arkansas. Deep well-drained soil is best for growing. The roots can extend as deep as three feet into the soil. Beets come in many varieties and can be red, purple, yellow and white. Beets are the sweetest of all vegetables.

Buying Tip:

Look for beets that are firm and smooth. The leaves should be bright and not wilted if attached.

Fun Facts

- Beet sugar makes up about one-third of the world's table sugar market.
- Beet leaves were once used by the Romans for medicinal purposes.



Beet Hummus

Ingredients

Serves: 24

- 2 medium beets
- 2 15oz. Can of chickpeas
- 1Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp roasted sunflower seeds
- 1 Clove garlic
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 pinch of pepper

How to prepare

1. Wash, peel and chop beets.
2. Spread the chopped beets on a baking sheet lined with foil and roast in the oven at 400F for 15-20 minutes.
3. Save some of the canned chickpea liquid to add to blender.
4. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Add a small amount of water if too thick.
5. Serve as a dip for raw vegetables, pita or whole wheat tortilla chips.

Nutrients per 1 serving: 90 Calories, 3.5g Total Fat, 240mg Sodium, 11g Carbohydrates, 3g Dietary Fiber, 4g Protein

Source: Growing My Plate



HOW TO DECIDE WHAT TO GROW!

Choose vegetables you enjoy eating and are excited about growing. Look for vegetables that grow best in your area. The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is a good source for information on deciding what and when to plant. Thinking about what vegetables give the most value for the time and space needed. Lastly, consider the space you have for a garden. Each plant will need a certain amount of space in order to reach its full potential. Planting plants too close runs the risk of stunting plant growth, blocking sunlight and preventing good air circulation. Consider the height of the vegetables once they reach full maturity.



HELPFUL RESOURCE: The Farmers Almanac can give you a list of which vegetables give you the best bang for your buck.

DID YOU KNOW?

Seed to Spoon is an app that makes square foot gardening easy. It provides information on when and where to plant, companion plants and how many of each plant can be planted in one square foot.

SQUARE FOOT GARDENING:

Square foot gardening is used in raised beds to get the most out of the space. The idea is to space plants using square feet, vertical growing and planting plants that are compatible. If plants attract the same insects, diseases or compete for the same nutrients then it is best not to plant them near one another. A companion plant will help by either repelling harmful insects, attracting good insects, shade, support or add nutrients to the soil. Set up a trellis for vining plants, like cucumbers, so they can grow up the trellis instead of spreading out on the ground.

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