



Connecting New Jersey Farms to Local Schools

Collard Greens are the featured item in our Garden State on Your Plate tastings!

Our Collard Greens Tasting begins with a small piece of raw collard green, which the students season with salt and a squeeze of lemon. They then taste slow-cooked collard greens. Students are asked to pay attention to how cooking changes the flavor and texture of collard greens.

Collard Green Stems are tough, but they are edible and will soften with cooking. The stems take longer to cook than the leaves, so it is best to cut them into small pieces and cook them first, adding the leaves later.

Collard Green Leaves are sturdy, filling, and nutritious. They are also easy to grow and prepare. Remove the greens from the stem and slice the greens into ribbons. Cook them by braising, steaming, or sautéing until tender. Or slice the greens fine and toss, raw, with vinaigrette. Add some shredded carrots or green cabbage, and finely chopped apple to make a tasty slaw.



The Entire Collard Green Leaf can be used to make a Collard Green Wrap! Cut off the bottom end of the stem where it meets the leafy green. Place the leaf on a cutting board with the darker green side face down. Shave off the thick part of the stem with a vegetable peeler until the stem is about the same thickness as the leaf. You can steam the leaf lightly if you want it to be very soft or just use it raw. Pile on your favorite vegetable, meat, grain, and dairy fillings, tuck in the sides, and roll the leaf to make a healthful, delicious wrap!

See Garden State on Your Plate photos on Facebook at www.facebook.com/psgcoop.org

Collard Green Coleslaw

Serves 8 • Recipe adapted from *Vegetarian Times*

When you pour hot dressing over the greens, they wilt slightly, making them softer and easier to chew than raw greens. Allow time to chill the salad to let the flavors develop and combine. Serve as a side dish, or use to top a barbecue sandwich.

- 1/2 lb. collard greens, (8 leaves)
- 3 medium carrots, grated (2 cups)
- 1 medium red bell pepper, diced (1 cup)
- 1/2 cup rice or cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 tsp. powdered mustard
- 1 tsp. celery seed
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 medium crisp apple, diced

1. Wash collard greens well and strip the leaves off of the tough stems. Spin or shake leaves to dry and then stack on a cutting board. Cut the leaves into narrow strips, then rough chop the strips into pieces. Place greens in a large heat-proof bowl and toss in carrots and red pepper.
2. In a small saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, oil, mustard, celery seed, salt, and pepper. Whisk it all together as you bring the mixture to a boil. When the sugar has dissolved, remove from heat, and pour over the salad. Toss well until vegetables are coated with dressing. Toss in apples and season with salt and pepper. Cover bowl, and place in refrigerator for at least 4 hours.

ON PAGE 3 YOU'LL FIND TWO CLASSIC RECIPES FOR PREPARING COLLARD GREENS

Ingredients that Go Well with Collard Greens

black beans • butter • cardamom • carrots • chili peppers • citrus cloves • coconut • cornbread • cumin • garlic • ginger • hazelnuts • leeks • lemon • lentils • mustard • olive oil • olives • onions • peanuts • potatoes • raisins • rice • scallions • sesame • shallots • smoked paprika • squash • sweet potatoes • tomatoes • vinegar

Words that Describe the Flavor, Color, and Texture of Collard Greens

acidic • assertive • blue-green • bitter • broccoli-like • chewy • deep green • earthy • fibrous • hearty • hot • mild • pungent • savoyed • smooth • sweet • tough • vegetal • velvety

GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE COLLARD GREENS FACTS

Collard greens are a member of the cabbage family. Unlike the tight head of a typical cabbage, collards have large, dark green leaves that grow in a loose bouquet.

The leaves of the most commonly grown varieties of collard greens are smooth with slightly ruffled edges. The leaves grow on an upright stalk that can reach several feet tall.

Collard greens are available year round, but they are sweeter and tastier when grown in cold months after the first frost.

The name collards is believed to have derived from the word *colewort*, which is a 14th century English word for cabbage.

Collards and black-eyed peas are traditional New Year's Day dishes that are thought to bring good fortune in the coming year.

Collards have more fiber, calcium, niacin, and vitamin B5 than other cultivated leafy greens. They are also higher in protein, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, folate, and vitamin K than almost all other greens.

Collards are so beloved in the American South that they are celebrated in poetry, songs, literature, and festivals. Collards are even the official state vegetable of South Carolina!

The Greeks and Romans grew collards in their gardens over 2,000 years ago. Today, collards are eaten around the world in different ways by different cultures.

Collard greens are a cultivar (cultivated variety) of the species *Brassica oleracea* and are closely related to Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, and cabbage.

The collards at the local grocery store and farmers market typically have flat, green leaves. But there are many different varieties of collards, including blue-stem collards, purple collards, yellow-green collards, and variegated collards. And collards can have smooth leaves, dull leaves, shiny leaves, or crinkly leaves.



Garden State on Your Plate is a series of seasonal produce tastings in the cafeterias at Princeton Public Schools. The emphasis is on a New Jersey produce item, its growth requirements, the different ways it can be prepared, and how the flavor can be altered by the chef and the students. Students learn about farming, climate, and cooking, and they gain flavor power—the ability to personalize their item using salt and citrus. The tastings illustrate and amplify curriculum in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and in the district's Edible Gardens.



Founded in 2006, Princeton School Gardens Cooperative fosters garden- and food-based education in the classroom, cafeteria and community • PSGCOOP.ORG

Cooked Greens

Serves 4 • Recipe adapted from *In Pursuit of Flavor*, by Edna Lewis (Knopf, 1988).

Vegan variation from Claire Robinson on the Food Network: Substitute 1 large onion, diced; 1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika; and pinch of cayenne pepper for the pork. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened, about 5 minutes. Add 1/2 cup water to the pot and once the water is simmering, add the greens.

- 1 pound cured smoked pork shoulder: bacon, or streak-of-lean
- 3 quarts water
- 3 pounds greens, such as collards, mustard, or turnip greens, or a mix
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Cook the pork and water in a 5-quart pot for 1½ hours or more, until the meat is very tender.
2. Remove the meat from the stock and discard.
3. Add the greens. You will have to pack them in but they cook down quickly.
4. Cook over medium-high heat for about 25 to 30 minutes. Do not cover the pot or the greens may turn dark. Be careful not to undercook the greens, which is as bad for them as overcooking. Begin tasting after 15 minutes.
5. During cooking, season them with salt and black pepper.
6. Lift them from the pot, shake off excess liquid, and serve hot.

Southern Collards

Serves 4 • Recipe by Tomia MacQueen, Princeton Public Schools Food Systems Literacy Coordinator

This family recipe is comforting, flexible, and tasty! Other ingredient options include smoked bacon, pancetta, or any favorite smoked meat. Use spicy chilis, smoked paprika or smoked salt for a yummy vegan version. Best served with hot southern cornbread.

- 1 cup water (for vegan option, use vegetable broth in place of water)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic (optional)
- 1-2 smoked ham hocks, or 1/4 pound chopped fatback (substitute smoked turkey or smoked paprika for healthier options)
- 1 pound minimum collards (those that have been touched by frost are much more tender and cook faster, so ask your farmer)
- 1 large green bell pepper, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Hot pepper flakes or sauce (optional)

1. Place water, onion, garlic (if you are using it), and smoked meat into a large pot. Cover and bring to a simmer. (Tip: Stainless steel or cast iron is best. Collards do not cook down as much as other large greens, so use a stock pot if you are making a large amount.) Never let the water run out, top it up as needed. If you use a leaner meat or no meat, you will need to add 2 tablespoons of vegetable or olive oil.
2. Wash the collards thoroughly in a large sink. (Tip: feel the bottom of the sink for sand or debris. If you feel any, wash the greens again.)
3. Stack leaves, roll them, and cut them lengthwise, once down the center. Then slice them several times going across to make the process faster and to ensure that your greens cook more evenly.
4. Once your smoked meat has simmered for 30 minutes (1 hour for pork). Add your cut collards and bell pepper.
5. Place the pot on a very low heat for 2 hours. (Tip: stir often and do not let the water run out, which will scorch your greens.)
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add hot pepper flakes.
7. Cover and cook for 1 hour more, stirring often. (Tip: try not to add any more water after this point unless absolutely necessary as it will dilute your flavors.)