

Swiss chard



What is it? Swiss chard is a vegetable related to spinach and beets. One plant produces a lot of food. When just starting out, grow only a few plants to get the hang of it and figure out how much you can use.

Planting: Plant seeds $\frac{1}{2}$ deep, spaced 8 to 12 inches apart on all sides. Plant in April or early May. Two weeks after seeds sprout, remove all but one plant from each little clump.

Growing: Keep area weeded. Once plants are established, mulch around them with straw, hay, or grass clippings. Plants will grow spring, summer, and fall if kept tended.

Harvesting: Any time after the leaves are a few inches long, harvest by cutting the stems of the outer leaves near the base of the plant. Let the inside leaves grow. Leaves can get large (8-12 inches, easy). The stems and leaves are edible.

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Cleaning: Rinse leaves and stems using a large pot of cold water. Drain in a dish drainer.

Eating Raw: If harvested small (4 inches or smaller), leaves and stems can be added to salads and eaten raw. Larger leaves can be **massaged** or **rubbed** to create a wilted-type salad. Try this easy recipe!

1. After rinsing, remove leaves from stems by tearing or cutting. Tear leaves into small pieces and put in a mixing bowl. Keep stems for later. Feel free to add some kale.
2. Drizzle olive oil to coat leaves. Add juice of one lemon or 1-2 tablespoons of vinegar.
3. Using your hands, massage ingredients until leaves have softened. Let sit 10 to 15 minutes.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste plus any other ingredients you want. Try fresh fruit pieces, dried fruit, seeds, nuts, grated carrot, sweet pepper slices, crumbled cheese, and others!

Cooking: A simple way to prepare Swiss chard is to do a combo sauté and steam job on it.

1. After rinsing, chop the stems and leaves separately. The stems take a little longer to cook.
2. Using a deep pot or pan with a lid, over medium heat, add a little oil to the pan. Then add the stems. Stir.
3. In a couple of minutes, add the leaves. Stir until everything is coated. To add a little more flavor, throw in some garlic and raisins.
4. Turn the burner to low and cover with a lid to steam. Add a little bit of water if needed.
5. After 7-10 minutes, turn off the burner, remove the lid, and add salt, pepper, and a little bit of vinegar to taste. Try adding chopped nuts as well.

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