



GTCG WEEKLY

Recipes, Garden Pests and TidBits

Newsletter

Issue #4

Spinach

[Scientific name: *Spinacia Oleracea* |

GROWTH

Spinach requires six weeks of cool weather from seeding to harvest, so sow seeds directly into the soil as soon as the ground warms to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Water spinach to keep soil moist, and use row covers to maintain cool soil and deter pests. Harvest a few outer leaves from each plant when the plant reaches desired size. Bitterness can set in in a mature plant, so harvest as soon as you can.

DISEASES/PESTS

Aphids are a common garden pest that will leave spinach with misshapen/yellow leaves and black mold. To combat these mites, grow companion plants like beans, peas or corn. You can also put banana or orange peels around plants and wipe leaves with 1% to 2% solution of dish soap with no additives.



HISTORY

Spinach is native to Persia and was introduced to China in the 7th century. It was brought to the United States around 1806.



PRESERVATION

Fresh spinach can be good for up to one week. Store fresh spinach unwashed and do not rinse until ready to use. Pat dry with a paper towel after harvesting and put in a freezer bag with a paper towel to absorb moisture. To freeze spinach:

1. Wash leaves in cold water to remove any dirt. Tear any larger leaves into small pieces, discarding the stems.
2. Blanch the leaves: Fill a large stock pot with 1 to 2 inches of water, and bring that to a boil. Place spinach in a colander or steamer basket and put on top of the pot. Cover with lid to heat and cook until wilted, about two minutes.
3. Have a bowl of ice water and another empty bowl on top. After blanching, transfer spinach from basket into empty bowl and stir constantly to cool spinach.
4. Once the spinach is cold, place into freezer bags and flatten bags before sealing to save space. Keep greens for up to 12 months.

Recipe of the Week

Spinach Artichoke Dip



INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
- 12 ounces fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 (14 ounce) can quartered artichoke hearts, drained and coarsely chopped
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cut into 1 inch blocks
- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella, torn or shredded
- 4 ounces plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese finely grated

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in medium pot over medium heat, add garlic and cook until fragrant.
2. Add spinach into pot, one handful at a time, letting each handful completely wilt before adding the next. Add crushed red pepper if using. Cook, stirring frequently, until most of the water has evaporated. Add artichokes and season with salt and pepper. Cook for three minutes.
3. Reduce heat to low and add cream cheese and mozzarella; warm until melted. Stir in Greek yogurt and parmesan. Transfer to oven-proof skillet or casserole dish and top with mozzarella cheese and parmesan. Broil until top is golden, three to five minutes.

CONSUMPTION

Frozen spinach can be added to soups, quiches or smoothies to add bulk and an abundance of nutrients. Fresh spinach can be used the same way, or to make a fresh salad on a hot summer's day.

NUTRITION

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 11 grams (g) fat, 7 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 320 milligrams sodium.



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EXTENSION

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