A large number of widely differing species of plants are grown for use as “greens.” The better known kinds are spinach, kale, collards, turnips, beets, chard, mustard, broccoli leaves, chicory, endive, escarole, dandelion, cress, and sorrel. Many others, some of them wild, are also used to a limited extent as greens. Greens are available at varying times between April 15 and November 1. For information on varieties of greens in Ohio, contact your county Extension educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

**Selection**
- Select fresh, young, tender greens free from blemishes and of a healthy green color. Beet tops and ruby chard show a reddish color.
- Avoid greens that show insect injury, coarse stems, seed stems, dry or yellowing leaves, dirt, or poor development.
- Greens should be crisp, never wilted.
- Select only an amount that can be used in a short period of time.

**Storage**
- Put greens away promptly in the crisper area of the refrigerator.
- Only buy what you can use in a few days. Throw away moldy or slimy produce and that which has been kept too long.
- Do not wash produce until you are ready to use it. Do not store wet since this encourages bacterial growth.

**Yield**
Due to many variables, including moisture content, size, and variety, it is impossible to give specific recommendations as to quantity to buy. The following recommendations are approximations.
- 1 bushel = 20 pounds greens
- 1 bushel = 8–9 quarts
- 1 pound fresh greens, cooked = 2 or 3 (1/2 cup) servings

**Nutrition**
The “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” recommend that adults need 2–2 1/2 cups of a variety of vegetables daily. Greens are excellent choices to help meet this nutritional requirement. They provide abundant amounts of phytochemicals and antioxidants that help prevent cancer and fight heart disease. Greens are excellent sources of Vitamins A, C, E, and K. They also add folate, potassium, iron, and fiber to the diet.
Greens are low in calories until dressings, sauces, or other combinations of ingredients are added. One-half cup of cooked greens has about 20 calories.

**Safe Handling**

Clean surfaces, utensils, and hands after touching raw meat and poultry and before you use them on fresh produce. Wash greens just before using. To remove dirt, wash thoroughly in cold water. Do not use soap, detergent, or bleach as they can leave residues or be absorbed by the produce. Drain and rinse several times with cold water. Lift vegetables from water to prevent redepositing of dirt and residues. Remove damaged leaves and tough stems. Greens should be cooked while wet, immediately after washing.

**Serving**

- Greens are great wilted or molded, for salads, souffles, and main course dishes.
- Cook fresh greens in very little water and only until tender to retain nutrients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate cooking times needed for fresh greens</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beet Greens</td>
<td>5–15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
<td>10–20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td>3–10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
<td>10–15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collards or Dandelions</td>
<td>10–20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnip Tops</td>
<td>10–30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Serving Ideas**

- Spinach: Use allspice, garlic, nutmeg, marjoram, oregano, mace, rosemary, or thyme.
- Turnips: Use allspice, basil, or nutmeg.
- One-Vegetable Combination: Greens cooked with onion, hard-cooked egg, bacon or ham, and/or white sauce.
- Season with dill weed, marjoram, mint, nutmeg, rosemary, minced onion, lemon juice or vinegar, crumbled crisply fried bacon, horseradish, chili sauce, or grated parmesan cheese.
- Panned: Sauté finely chopped garlic cloves in olive oil. Add washed, chopped greens and simmer till tender.

Greens are not recommended for preservation by canning, freezing, or drying.

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