

Chard

Essentially a variety of beets that has been selected for large meaty stalks rather than large roots. Picked young into salads, and mature for cooking, chard is a very useful garden staple.



TIPS

Storage: See the guidelines for Storing Greens in this handbook.

General Cooking info: It's best to separate the stems from the leafy parts before cooking as cooking time varies. Stems should be cooked first and then the greens added. Some people find the stems too stringy and tough even after cooking, and so discard them.

Growing info: Chard is a long-season plant which means it will keep putting out new growth until the really cold weather sets in in late fall. The quality of the new growth deteriorates late into the season so we usually do two plantings of chard one in the spring and one in the summer to keep the greens growing healthy. We also grow chard to be picked baby-size. When they are young and tender, they make great additions to salad-mixes.

Common Problems: We always get leaf-miners in our chard. Last year the damage was minimal, but the year before, we had a lot of them. Leaf-miners get their name from the fact that they actually burrow between the two outer surfaces of the leaf, eating along the way, they are protected from any controls we may apply. You'll see evidence of them in brownish tracks and splotches on the leaf. If you hold it up to light, you can actually see the tiny worms between the outer layers of the leaf. We cover our plantings early on to minimize the amount of leaf-miner eggs that are laid on the plants, and we pull affected leaves out to prevent the pests to reach full maturity.

Sauteed Swiss Chard with Parmesan Cheese

2 tablespoons butter
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 1/2 small red onion, diced
 1 bunch Swiss chard, stems and center ribs cut out and chopped together, leaves coarsely chopped separately
 1/2 cup dry white wine
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, or to taste
 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 salt to taste (optional)

Melt butter and olive oil together in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the garlic and onion, and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant. Add the chard stems and the white wine. Simmer until the stems begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chard leaves, and cook until wilted. Finally, stir in lemon juice and Parmesan cheese; season to taste with salt if needed.

Chard Tacos

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 large onion, cut into 1/4-inch slices
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon red pepper flakes, or to taste
 1/2 cup chicken broth
 1 bunch Swiss chard, tough stems removed and leaves cut crosswise into 1 1/2-inch slices

1 pinch salt
 12 corn tortillas
 1 cup crumbled queso fresco cheese
 3/4 cup salsa

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in the onion; cook and stir until the onion has softened and turned golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the chicken broth, Swiss chard, and salt. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until chard is nearly tender, about 5 minutes. Remove lid and increase heat to medium, stirring until the liquid evaporates, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat another skillet over medium-high heat. Warm the tortillas in the skillet for about 1 minute per side. Fill the warmed tortillas with the chard, and top with the queso fresco cheese and salsa.

from Allrecipes

Tuscan Bean and Swiss Chard Soup

1 lb dried white beans such as Great Northern, cannellini, or navy (2 cups), picked over and rinsed
 1/4 lb sliced pancetta, chopped
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 large onion, chopped
 1 fennel bulb (sometimes called anise), stalks discarded and bulb chopped
 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

4 cups chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth (32 fl oz)
 4 cups water
 1 (3- by 2-inch) piece Parmigiano-Reggiano rind
 1 Turkish or 1/2 California bay leaf
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 1/2 lb Swiss chard (preferably red or rainbow), stems discarded and leaves halved lengthwise, then thinly sliced crosswise
 1 teaspoon salt

Soak beans in cold water to cover by 2 inches in a bowl at room temperature at least 8 hours. Drain in a colander.

Cook pancetta in oil in a wide 6- to 8-quart heavy pot over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer pancetta with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain.

Cook onion and fennel in oil remaining in pot over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add beans, stock, water, cheese rind, bay leaf, and pepper and simmer, uncovered, until beans are tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Discard cheese rind and bay leaf.

Stir in Swiss chard and salt and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until chard is tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Season soup with salt and pepper.