

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

FAX: 932-5261

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BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.  
Food, Nutrition and Health Agent**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776  
e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu**A Different Shade of Green**

It's time to be picking collard greens, nice, fresh, tender collards. Of course some people will argue that there is no such thing as a tender collard. They are partly right. Collard greens are among the tougher members of the cabbage family. They generally need longer cooking times than most other greens, but that's not a reason to avoid them. And if you're not impressed by the long-boiled, soft greens cooked with ham hocks 'Southern style', there are plenty of other ways to serve them.

That extra toughness is because collards have more dietary fiber than any other leafy vegetable. We'd have to eat almost 10 cups of lettuce to get the same amount of fiber as 1 cup of chopped cooked collards. That fiber going through our system is a great help to the good bacteria that live there. They help keep us healthy, preventing the growth of dangerous bacteria and prodding our immune systems to stay active.

Collard greens are, like most other cabbage relatives, very nutritious veggies. Collards have more than double the vitamin A of either broccoli or cabbage. Most of the A is really beta carotene, but our bodies can change it into vitamin A fairly easily. Pure beta carotene is bright yellow-orange, like the carrots it is named for. As in most plants, the orange is covered by green. But if you look at the water you've cooked collards in you'll see that it looks slightly yellow. That's some of the carotene. Cooking actually makes it easier for us to digest and absorb carotene, so we get more from cooked vegetables than we do from the ones we eat raw. Boiled collards also have more vitamin C than cabbage, though not as much as broccoli.

Collards, like cabbage and kale, has more calcium than most vegetables. The best thing about all these cabbage-family vegetables is that we can absorb a lot of their calcium. We just get a tiny little bit of the calcium that's in spinach for example, but almost half of what's in collards or broccoli. That doesn't mean we can stop drinking our milk though. We'd have to eat 2½ cups of cooked broccoli or 3½ cups of cooked collards or kale to get as much calcium as we get from 1 cup of milk or yogurt. Since we need 3 cups of milk a day for our calcium, that would be an awful lot of collards!

Collards and cabbages also have more iron than most other leafy vegetables, but not nearly as much as beans and legumes. So while getting the iron is a good thing, we certainly can't depend on collards for our iron needs. Collards give us a few other minerals too such as magnesium and potassium to help keep our blood pressure down, selenium to protect us from mercury, and even a bit of manganese.

When you choose a bunch of collards, look for crisp leaves, not limp, wilted ones. They should be bluish green with no yellow patches on them. They'll keep for several days in the refrigerator if you keep them in an open bag. Don't tie the bag shut. Or wrap them loosely in paper towels. Don't wet them if you're going to store them.

When you're ready to use them wash them well, they can be sandy. Most people prefer to cut the leaf stalk off. It's easy to do if you fold the leaf in half along that mid-rib. With one slice you can take that stiff rib and the stalk off. Trim several leaves, then stack the folded leaves on top of one another and slice them thinly crosswise. Depending on how wide they are you might want to make one or two lengthwise cuts as well. The more thinly you slice the leaves the less you'll have to chew later.

Here's a recipe for a definitely-not-Southern style greens. These have a slightly

Oriental, slightly Greek, definitely delicious flavor. They're chopped first so they don't need to be boiled for very long. The recipe only calls for 6-8 minutes cooking, but if you prefer them more tender cook longer. The margarine helps us absorb the carotene, so don't omit it. This would be great served with barbequed ribs and brown rice. Enjoy!

### Tangy-Sweet Sautéed Greens

3-4 lbs washed collards	1 Tbsp oil
½ sweet onion, sliced	½ cup water
1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger root	2 Tbsp honey
5 Tbsp margarine or butter, melted	3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
salt, pepper to taste	pinch crushed red pepper, optional

Trim and chop the greens. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook until slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Do not brown. Add greens, in batches if necessary, until all are in pan and wilted. Add water and cook, stirring occasionally, until bright green and tender, 5-8 minutes. Adjust heat to prevent burning. While greens cook, whisk other ingredients together in serving bowl. Add greens to bowl, toss to coat and serve warm. Adjust salt and pepper if necessary. Serves 8.

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