

Greens Zine



**Plant
a Seed
2023**



Greens belong to all of us.

We who eat our collard, mustard, and
turnip greens because we love them.
However we eat them, we are those folks
who do so in total wallowing enjoyment.

- Dr. Leni Sorensen
food scholar, chef, historian



Slow Food USA unites the joy of food with the pursuit of justice.

We cultivate nationwide programs and a network of local chapters, host educational events and advocacy campaigns, and build solidarity through partnerships.

Together, we are dismantling oppressive food systems to achieve good, clean and fair food for all.



**With the Plant a Seed campaign,
Slow Food USA invites growers to engage
with climate and nutrition in our gardens
and on our plates.**

In 2023, the kit brings together a cast of rare and biodiverse seeds that tell a story — and celebrate glorious greens!

This year's kit and supplemental events and materials highlight the big groups of greens — brassicas, mustards, lettuces, chicories and amaranths — and the communities who celebrate them. The seven beautiful, easy to grow, and highly nutritious greens varieties in the kit feature many from our catalog of distinctive and delicious foods, the Ark of Taste.

The 2023 Plant a Seed campaign will inspire you to nourish your connections to your food and community as well as connect you to this land's diverse foodways. Let's grow greens together and see what they have to teach us about climate resilience, nutrition, and cultural and biological diversity!



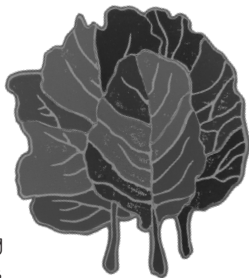
ULTRACROSS COLLARDS

Brassica oleracea

These Ultracross Collards are the result of a national heirloom collard trial spearheaded by the Utopian Seed Project. This seed packet contains the natural crosses of 21 heirloom varieties. This is a great option for the home gardener with limited space who really wants the chance to have every seed you plant produce something different.

From our friends at the Utopian Seed Project: "This mix represents a great chance to plant out a large quantity of different genetics and save seeds from the survivors. Where each and every one of you take this collard population is only limited by your imagination."

The Ark of Taste variety Yellow Cabbage Collard is one of the 21 varieties in this special mix of seeds! Also known as the Carolina Cabbage Collard, the plant differs from other landrace coleworts as it has thinner leaves, with finer veining and more of a yellow tone to its shade of green.



“Collards, I’m talking about you . . . You are more than an ingredient. You are memory. You are truck patches near the cabins of the enslaved and the first thriving acres of freedpeople. Collards, you are the bringer of the spring, the closer of winter, a marker of seasons from those of the sun, to the seasons of our lives. You represent memories of washing leaves in sinks and big cast iron pots and hot steamy air that smells like survival, and health and joy and resistance. You give life, calcium, Vitamins A and C, and protein. You recall the rites of leaves curled and cut, the passing of stories with recipes. Notes about our ancestors are written gently on your ribs and veins. You collards are our familiar, our sojourner, our past and our future.”

Dear Brassica oleracea var. viridis, Michael Twitty

Region: All

Seed source: Ujamaa Seeds

Primary use: Cooking green

Qualities: A wide range across 21 different varieties

Days to maturity: 75 Growing: Plant from early spring to approximately 3 months before expected fall frost. Start indoors 4-6 weeks before last frost.

MATILDE ESCAROLE

Cichorium endivia

Escarole is a beautiful fluffy head of delicious and slightly bitter leaves. It has a varied early history, noted in the early histories of Rome, Greece and Egypt and for good reason, it is delicious, hearty, grows well in many zones and lends itself to raw salads just as well to cooking in soups and sautes. The leaves are tender and the flavor is very distinctive, even slightly nutty, and very mildly bitter. This variety has bright yellow cores, full heads and resists bolting in hot summer sowings. This seed comes to us from the Gusto Italiano Project of Uprising Seeds, Smarties.Bio and the Culinary Breeding Network.

Region: Northwest

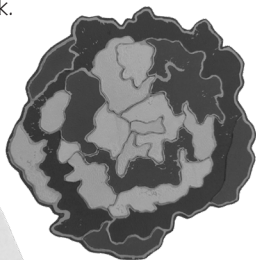
Seed source: Uprising Seeds

Primary use: Cooking and salad green

Qualities: Buttery color, tender but toothsome leaves

Days to maturity: 60

Growing: Transplant at 4 weeks old and space these plants 8-12" apart depending on the size of head



“Chicories, including radicchio and escarole, are cool season vegetables that originated and are still widely grown in the Veneto region of northeastern Italy. Most Americans are not familiar with chicories but many Italian-Americans have grown up with a grandparent that grew it in their garden or make a point to seek it out in grocery stores to connect with their family roots. Chicories are a great winter crop in northern climates, providing a locally grown alternative to lettuce shipped from warmer regions during the colder months.”

— Lane Selman, Culinary Breeding Network



NEW MEXICO AMARANTH

Amaranthus hypochondriacus

This beautiful and unique bi-colored grain amaranth has upright, pale green flower heads streaked with pink markings. The New Mexico Amaranth is a great candidate for edible landscaping anywhere, as it is a beautiful and resilient plant, with a high drought tolerance. New Mexico Amaranth was introduced by Native Seeds Search and was collected originally from a dooryard garden in New Mexico but grows very well in any climate. This seed comes to us from Hudson Valley Seed Company, a trusted source for heirloom and open-pollinated garden seeds. This amaranth seed has adapted to Northern and Southern climates.





Region: Southwest

Seed source: Hudson Valley Seed Company

Primary use: Nutritious green vegetable and grain crop

Qualities: Cooking green; nutty seeds grind into a flour, or you can pop them like popcorn

Days to maturity: Tender greens: 21-28 days. Seed to bloom: 12 weeks.

Growing: Direct sow after threat of frost has passed; also transplants well. If growing for greens, direct sow for a thick patch of greens. If growing for grains, thin to 6-10" apart. Taller plants may need staking to keep from flopping over.

“Quelites are wild Mexican greens from the amaranth family. My mom’s from the foothills in a small village in Guanajuato so hillside forages were instant meals she could always count on.”

— Chef Maricela Vega

SEA KALE

Brassica crambe maritima

Sea Kale is a unique perennial brassica garden plant with origins along the Atlantic Coast of the British Isles and Northern Europe. This crop has become naturalized in the Northwest and Northeast regions of the US. Sea kale thrives in both seaside and landlocked settings and prefers marginalized soils, making it a great candidate for urban gardens. It does best in growing zones 4-8 but is readily adaptable. The plant withstands wind, salt and cold temperatures and roots in stony or sandy soil. Sea Kale is not only valued for its beneficial contribution to the surrounding ecosystem but is edible from flower to root for nutrient- rich culinary preparations.

Region: Northeast

Seed source: Fedco Seeds

Primary use: Blanched spring green

Qualities: Edible from flower to root and adaptable

Days to maturity: Perennial

Growing: Scarify seeds to aid in germination (rub along some sandpaper to scar up the seed casing a bit)

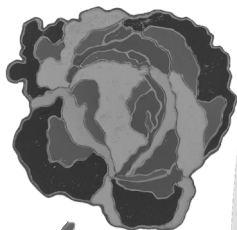


HANSON LETTUCE

Lactuca sativa

Hanson lettuce, a variety of Curled India lettuce, was imported into Maryland in 1800 and from there it was improved by the Hanson family. In 1870 George Hanson conveyed the lettuce seed to the Henry Dreer Seed Company of Philadelphia, which made it a nationally significant variety.

The quality of the Hanson Lettuce drove the salad revolution of the last decades of the 19th century, it was a major market lettuce grown in the United States. Its tender qualities make it an ideal candidate for the home garden for early season and late season growing. This special lettuce has stayed almost exclusively in the hands of seed savers and home gardeners for over a century.



Region: Midwest

Seed source: Small House Farm

Primary use: Salad green

Qualities: Large, crisp and tender green leaves with a white heart

Days to maturity: 75

Growing: Direct sow or transplant.

Thin after emergence or space these plants 8-12" apart.

YU CHOY SUM

Brassica rapa var. Parachinensis

Yu Choy Sum represents an essential pillar of the wide family of Asian greens. This amazing green can be eaten from its juicy stems to its delicious flowers. It grows well in all climates, and has been called the warm season Chinese broccoli. It can be harvested at any stage of its growth, either as Yu Choy (stem and leaf) or Yu Choy Sum (stem, leaf and flower buds). Seeds can be planted in late spring, summer or early fall. The taste of choy sum is much sweeter and more tender, with a texture closer to bok choy. This seed comes to us from the Experimental Farm Network, a non-profit organization committed to regenerative agriculture and justice for all people. Their team of small growers and dedicated volunteers produce unique and high quality seeds without exploiting the planet or its inhabitants.

Region: All

Seed source: Experimental Farm Network


Primary use: Cooking green

Qualities: Mild and sweet

Days to maturity: 45

Growing: Harvest when the buds are barely maturing, with a few just blooming.





“Vegetables are essential in Chinese cooking. Whether a mound of stir-fried greens, a burbling clay pot of tofu and cabbage, or a side of spicy pickles, vegetable dishes are put together with as much thought as any meat or seafood dish. Balance of seasonality, flavors, textures, and sometimes curative properties guides the preparation.”

— Chef Hsiao-Ching Chou



FEASTER'S MUSTARD

Brassica juncea

This heirloom variety has been stewarded and preserved by members of the Feaster family of rural Shiloh, Florida since the Civil War. The leaves of this incredible mustard green are broad, pale-green and smooth in texture — they can get quite large, some leaves reaching 2 feet tall. This mustard is distinctive in that it is milder than most mustard greens, with a spicy bite that sweetens when cooked. The distinctive mid-ribs are large, juicy and crunchy. It grows happily in many growing zones and is a self-sower when left to go to seed, generously returning year after year all over the garden.

Region: Southeast

Seed source: Working Food

Primary use: Cooking green

Qualities: Mild and slightly sweet

Days to maturity: 45

Growing: Direct sow or transplant

- thin after emergence or space
these large plants 10-18" apart



cutting greens

Lucille Clifton

**curling them around
i hold their bodies in obscene embrace
thinking of everything but kinship.
collards and kale
strain against each strange other
away from my kissmaking hand and
the iron bedpot.
the pot is black.
the cutting board is black,
my hand,
and just for a minute
the greens roll black under the knife,
and the kitchen twists dark on its spine
and i taste in my natural appetite
the bond of live things everywhere.**

GROUPS OF GREENS

There are so many greens to explore! In this year's Plant a Seed kit, we are exploring the groups: brassicas, mustards, lettuces, chicories and amaranths, but encourage you to expand your greens knowledge to the beet green and spinach families!

BRASSICA

This enormously diverse genus group is filled with so many related greens that have been selectively bred for different traits. So many of the varieties of greens in our kit highlight the adaptability of this group and all of the specific traits brassicas are known for, from stem to leaf to flower to head shape.

Brassica oleracea - collards, kale, cabbages

Selected for leaves

Brassica rapa - turnips, Chinese cabbages, rapini

Selected for stems and flowers

Brassica juncea - mustards

Selected for leaves & ribs

Brassica crambe maritima - perennial kale

Selected for its shoots, perennial nature, edibility, adaptability

LETTUCE

This group is filled with so much delicious variety and texture! Lettuces have been cultivated for centuries, starting with the ancient Egyptians. Used primarily for salads, lettuces are also delicious grilled, braised or in soups. *Lactuca* is Latin for dairy, referring to the milky sap that runs through the veins of all lettuces.

CHICORY

This group boasts some of the most gorgeous and varied greens. Distinctive for their bitter bite, they perform equally well raw or cooked in salty dishes, and alongside cured meat and earthy legumes.

AMARANTH

The amaranth group is widely adapted across the globe and prominently cultivated in tropical Africa, Caribbean, Asian and Central and South American countries. Related to spinach, amaranth greens are extremely nutritious, delicious and can be used in a variety of preparations such as steaming, sauteing, stewing and fermentation. Amaranths, when let go to seed, will produce a deeply nutritious pseudograin, making this plant a powerful nutritional garden companion.

"Finally, the first week of harvest arrived. Mesclun, spinach, and lettuce were cut and washed for salads. Herbs and radishes were bunched for beautiful farmer's market displays. Escarole was loaded into bins and packed into the farm's colorful delivery truck. The days were gradually getting shorter, and some of the nights were growing cooler. The radicchios continued to develop into healthy and delicious vegetables. Their bed was one of the most beautiful and diverse on the farm, and to their great surprise, the farmers began harvesting more and more radicchios every week."

Excerpt from *The Very Bitter Radicchio*
by Georgi de Rham

TIPS FOR GROWING GREENS

- Starting all brassicas, chicories and lettuces indoors in seedling trays will result in strong plants that can fend off most diseases and pests.
- If you plant greens near legumes, or in a space after a legume crop, they will benefit greatly from the nitrogen the legumes fix into the soil.
- Aim to space all of your greens 8"-12".
- Don't overwater your greens! Extra moisture in the leaves attracts pests and promotes mildewing.
- Keeping your greens beds weed-free keeps your greens strong. Consider mulching for best effects.
- Nearly all greens grow best in full sun.
- If you have very hot summers, use shade cloth or shade structures over your lettuces and chicories.
- All of these greens will grow well in containers if you don't have a garden plot!

Greens lend themselves beautifully to successional planting. You can get several crops a season! The checkboxes mean that's when to start your seeds in a seed tray, TP is when it's time to transplant seedlings to a larger container or your gardens!

CROP	MONTH 1				MONTH 2				MONTH 3				MONTH 4			
Sea Kale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						TP									
Ultracross Collards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Feaster's Mustard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP						
New Mexico Amaranth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TP						
Hanson Lettuce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Matilde Escarole	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Yu Choy Sum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

PROTECTING GROWING GREENS

- **Brassica:** Caterpillars, flea beetles, and harlequin beetles prey on brassicas. Start brassicas indoors in pots and transplant them when they are a month old. Then use floating row cover at the early stages of growth in the ground to protect them from flea beetles and moths laying eggs that will become caterpillars.
- **Lettuce:** Lettuces are susceptible to mildew and aphids when they are stressed out — especially in cool and wet conditions.
- **Chicory:** There aren't many pests of note for the chicory family, except for slugs and snails. Too much moisture whether in cool or warm conditions promotes these pests as well as fungal and bacterial issues.
- **Amaranth:** Warm and wet conditions can affect amaranth negatively; they prefer warm and dry conditions. Leaf miners are amaranth's main pests, but usually they usually do not cause damage beyond the cosmetic.

GREENS AND NUTRITION

Greens are nutritional powerhouses and allies in our complete nutrition. Simply adding 1-2 cups of greens to your diet daily will protect your overall health. The antioxidant qualities of all greens can keep heart disease at bay and may fight cancer. Some greens even contribute strong amounts of protein!

- Vitamin A: Every leafy green contains Vitamin A, essential for white blood cell production and cell growth.
- B-Complex Vitamins: Mustards and broccoli provide significant amounts of these vitamins, essential for brain development, cell metabolism and keeping your immune and nervous systems healthy.
- Vitamin C: We all know citrus is loaded with Vitamin C, and so are leafy greens! Good for immune system, healing and bone health.
- Vitamin E: This vitamin is fat soluble so a little bit of fat helps your body to absorb this important vitamin. It's essential for proper function of skin, brain and blood and important for your vision and reproductive systems.
- Vitamin K: All greens are loaded with Vitamin K - a protector of our bone and blood health. This vitamin is also fat soluble.

GREENS AND CLIMATE

- Increasing your greens intake and reducing red meat consumption has a positive climate impact (and a positive impact on your health).
- Greens produce more food in less time than any other crop.
- In times of climate uncertainty, fast-growing crops ensure fewer nutritional gaps.
- Greens are well adapted to all climate conditions — drought, wet, cool, hot, long season, short season.
- Greens are starting to be produced more frequently in indoor vertical farms to address challenges with climate change, particularly the increase of flooding and drought.
- Growing a vegetable garden actively reduces greenhouse gas emissions and therefore mitigates the effects of climate change.

Recipes

QUICK SOUTHERN STYLE COLLARDS

From Ira Wallace

Ingredients

- 1-2 T. olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 1 to 2 bunches tender collard greens, well washed, stems removed and chopped
- 1/2 cup rich savory broth or 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Procedure

Coat the bottom of a large cast iron skillet with the olive oil then add the onion and cook until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the chopped collards to the pan along with the broth or vinegar, optional red pepper flakes and some salt and pepper and cook until tender, but still bright green, 4 to 5 minutes. Adjust the seasoning if necessary. Serve with bottled hot sauce and vinegar at the table.

Reprinted with permission from the Heirloom Collard Project blog

A FEAST OF FEASTER FAMILY HEIRLOOM MUSTARD GREENS

From Jerome Feaster

Ingredients

35-30 leaves of greens, a large handful

4-6 pieces of smoked bacon, or another smoked meat

Salt

Procedure

Harvest leaves when you can't wait any longer. Wash greens twice. Strip from midrib and tear out or cut into small pieces. You may cut stems into small pieces and cook separately. Stems will have the consistency of cooked celery. Put 4-6 pieces of smoked bacon or other smoked meat for seasoning into a six quart pot. Add a cup or two of water and salt, bring to boil, and lower to medium heat for 30 minutes. Add greens to water a few pieces at a time. As they wilt, stir and add more greens, lower to a slow simmer. Cover and cook until greens achieve the tenderness and flavor you desire. About an hour if you want the greens to take on plenty of the bacon flavor. Drain, avoiding mashing the greens in the process, and serve. Serving with sweet potatoes and ham is popular, as is serving with a vinegar hot sauce.

Reprinted with permission from Working Food website

FRANKIE'S ESCAROLE SALAD

Adapted from Frankies Spuntino Handbook

Salad ingredients

2 small or 1 large head escarole

1 cup very, very thinly sliced red onion

1 cup walnuts, toasted and crumbled by hand

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Walnut Dressing (recipe follows)

1 tablespoon walnut oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup loosely packed Fiore Sardo or Pecorino Romano
cut into curls with a vegetable peeler

black pepper

Procedure

Discard the bitter dark green outer leaves of the escarole. Core the head and float it in a salad spinner full of cold water for a minute, then drain and spin it dry. Coarsely chop or tear the escarole into bite-size pieces.

Toss the escarole with the red onion and walnuts in a large salad bowl. Dress it with the Walnut Dressing and the walnut oil, tossing well to make sure the salad is evenly and lightly dressed.

Serve the salad in the bowl, or divide it among serving plates. Finish with curls of Pecorino or Fiore Sardo and offer fresh black pepper at the table.

Dressing ingredients

¼ cup walnut halves, crushed

1 teaspoon honey

1 tablespoon walnut oil

¼ cup grapeseed oil (I used olive oil)

1 tablespoon tap water

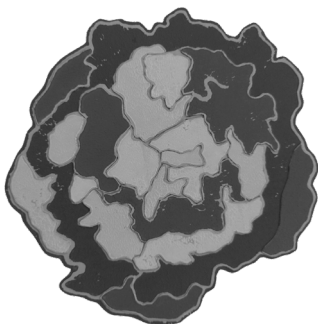
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Sea salt & freshly ground pepper, to taste

Procedure

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor and puree until emulsified. The color of the dressing should be uniform and the texture silky smooth. Check the seasoning and adjust as necessary. Use immediately or keep, covered, in the fridge for as short a time as possible (and no longer than 24 hours).

Shared by Lane Selman of Culinary Breeding Network



QUELITES GUIRADOS

From Maricela Vega of Restaurante Chico in Los Angeles

Ingredients

1 pound of wild greens ,like lambs quarters or amaranth
2 whole stalks of green garlic
A hefty handful of tomatillos, about 6 oz.
1 serrano pepper
1 aji amarillo
2 T. olive oil
Salt to taste

Procedure

Soak and rinse greens several times to remove all grit. Meanwhile, to make the salsa, heat a large cast iron skillet over high heat, add the green garlic, tomatillos, peppers and char the vegetables on all sides. Muddle vegetables by hand in a mortar and pestle with a generous pinch of salt and set aside. Reheat the skillet over medium-high heat, add oil and, once oil is shimmering hot, add greens to skillet. Season with salt and cook, stirring, until just wilted, about 2 minute. Remove from heat, add ¼ cup of the salsa to the skillet and stir to combine. Serve at once with warmed tortillas and remaining salsa.

Reprinted with permission from Crop Stories Vol. 5: Greens

YU CHOY WITH FRIED SHALLOTS

*Recipe from Vegetarian Chinese Soul
Food by Hsiao-Ching Chou*

“Yu choy is one of my go-to greens. It’s more tender than gai lan (Chinese broccoli) but heartier than spinach. To trim, cut about a half inch of the stem end to remove any dried, fibrous bits. The rest of the stem is perfectly fine to eat. Some Asian markets sell yu choy mui (baby yu choy), which is even more tender. While you can use store-bought fried shallots to save a few minutes, you can’t beat the flavor of freshly fried shallots.” — *Hsiao-Ching Chou*

Fried shallots ingredients

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium shallot, peeled and thinly sliced
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Yu choy ingredients

1 pound yu choy, trimmed and cut into ½-inch segments
2 tablespoons vegetable broth or water
1 ½ teaspoons soy sauce
1/8 teaspoon white pepper powder

Procedure

Preheat a wok over medium heat until wisps of smoke rise from the surface.

To make the fried shallots, add the oil and heat until it starts to shimmer. Add the shallots and stir with the wok spatula to loosen the shallot rings. Let fry for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring frequently to ensure even browning. When the shallots are golden, turn off the heat. Using a slotted spoon, remove the shallots to drain on a paper towel-lined plate. Sprinkle with the salt. Set aside while you prepare the yu choy.

If there are any burnt bits left in the residual oil that's in the wok, carefully remove them with the spatula. Turn the heat to high and heat the oil for a few seconds until it starts to shimmer. Add the yu choy and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the broth or water and the soy sauce. Stir-fry for 1 minute more. Add the fried shallots and stir to combine. Turn off the heat. Add the white pepper powder, stir again, and serve in a bowl.



SEED LIBRARIES

Do you have seeds to spare from your Plant a Seed kit?
Want to enhance your garden by exploring new seeds?
Want to find a gathering spot for seed lovers and
gardeners like yourself? Here are some resources that
could be helpful to you.

*Contact your local
seed library*



*Want to start a
seed library?*



*Want to build a
Little Free Library?*



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