

Joyce is Growing in vast phyto – diversity!!!

Red Basil
Sweet Pesto Basil
Genovese Basil
Bush Basil
Lemon Basil
Spicy Globe Basil
Sweet Medinette Basil
Creeping Thyme
German Thyme
Italian Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Skullcap
Borage
Lovage
Calendula
Oregano
French Sorrel
Chicory
Egyptian Onion
Chives
Asparagus Plants
Basket Strawberry
Beebalm Bergamot
Spearmint
Peppermint
Buttercream Wild Mint
Tequila Mint

POTTED PLANTS
4" Pots,
4-Cells
Bio Fiber Flats

FIDDLEHEADS

One of spring's earliest treats, fiddleheads are simply the immature leaf fronds of ostrich fern plants that have not yet opened. Native people introduced fiddleheads to early settlers and they remain a popular delicacy, especially in the Maritime Provinces.

Fern leaves are poisonous once they open and can only be enjoyed in this early stage, when they taste like a cross between artichokes, green beans and asparagus. Fiddleheads are rich in iron, potassium, niacin, riboflavin, magnesium, phosphorus and vitamins A and C.

Preparation

After a fiddlehead is removed from the stalk, the cut end starts to turn brown. Be sure to trim back the stem (about ¼ inch) to the healthy green section before cooking.

Fiddleheads are covered with a brownish, papery material that you need to remove before eating; do this by rubbing it off with your fingers, and then wash the fiddleheads in several changes of cold water to remove any dirt or grit. Drain the fiddleheads completely.

Fiddleheads can be prepared in similar ways to any firm green vegetable such asparagus or broccoli. Sauté, stir-fry or steam them briefly to retain their crunchy texture and bright green colour.

Cooked fiddleheads are delicious dotted with butter and sprinkled with fresh herbs and a splash of lemon juice. They are well-suited to cheese, tomato or cream sauces and add a nice touch of colour stir-fried dishes.

Note

Health Canada advises that fiddleheads should be cooked thoroughly before eating. Consuming raw or undercooked fiddleheads may cause 'green apple' symptoms including diarrhea, nausea and upset stomach.

Storage

Tightly wrap and store fresh fiddleheads in the refrigerator to prevent them from drying out. They may be kept refrigerated for about 10 days, although flavour will be best if eaten as soon as possible after harvest.



EAT THIS: Basic Boiled Fiddleheads

Recipes don't get any simpler than this one, yet many "hard core" Fiddlehead enthusiasts insist that this, or a simple sauté, is the only way to eat this woodland delicacy.

Ingredients:

1-pound Fiddleheads ferns, each about 1 to 1 ½ inches in diameter Trim the base of your ferns, leaving only a tiny tail beyond the circumference of each Fiddlehead. Rub off any remaining furry brown covering. Rinse under running water. Drop ferns into a large pot of boiling salted water. Boil for about 5 minutes (or steam for 15-20 minutes) until tender. If undercooked, you will miss the full, rich flavor. Drain well and serve piping hot with melted butter.

Sautéed Fiddlehead Ferns with Parsley and Garlic

This is probably the second easiest Fiddlehead recipe you're likely to come across, right after boiling and serving with butter. Again, this simple preparation brings out the wonderful, fresh flavor of the Fiddlehead with a minimum of fuss and bother. Served as a side dish with wild game and a bottle of burgundy, this is exquisite.

Ingredients:

1-pound Fiddleheads
1 or 2 garlic cloves, minced very fine
¼ cup butter or extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Trim any brown ends off of the fern shoots and wash them in cold water, pulling the paper-like brown skin off as you go. Drain and pat dry. Crush the minced garlic with the back of a spoon or the side of a large knife. Heat half of the butter (or olive oil) in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the fern shoots and turn the heat up to medium-high. The ferns should sizzle, but don't allow the butter to burn. Toss and stir for about 5 minutes. Add the butter (or oil), the garlic, and the parsley. Continue cooking for one minute longer, or until you can smell the garlic and the ferns are tender. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately on hot plates.

EAT THIS :

Vermont Fiddlehead Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 uncooked 9-inch piecrust
- 2 cups of Fiddleheads, coarsely chopped
- 1 small onion
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, either sharp or mild
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup half and half
- 1 tablespoon coarse mustard
- 2 tablespoons flour

Precook the piecrust in a 350-degree oven. Sauté the onions and Fiddleheads in olive oil and place in the precooked crust. Next, sprinkle the cheese evenly over the top. Blend the eggs, mustard, flour, half and half, and pour over other ingredients. Bake at 350 degrees for about 50 minutes. The pie will be cooked when a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. This dish may be served cold, warm, or hot, and is superb with a cold chardonnay and a tossed green salad.

Stir-Fried Fiddleheads

Ingredients

- 1 pound fiddlehead ferns
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon honey, dissolved in 2 tablespoons boiling water
- Salt and fresh black pepper

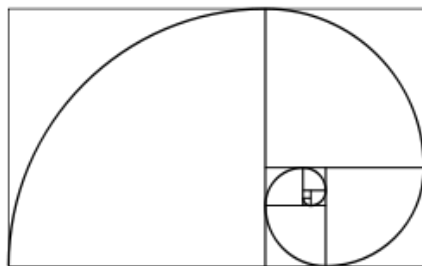
Wash fiddleheads in several changes of cold water. Pick through them, discarding any brown husks and cutting off any discolored ends. Heat oils in a wok. Stir-fry fiddleheads with coriander over high heat for 1 minute. Add honey water and cook ferns for 1-2 minutes more, or until tender. Season with salt and pepper and serve at once. Serves 4.

Sautéed Fiddleheads

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 ounces pancetta, chopped
- 1 pound fiddleheads
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. In sauté pan over medium-high heat, heat the olive oil. When the oil is quite hot, add the butter. As soon as it is melted, add pancetta. Stir a few times, and let cook 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add the fiddleheads and garlic, tossing them around in the oil a bit. Turn down the heat slightly, cover, and cook 3 to 4 minutes. Uncover and let cook another 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve. You can also toss sautéed fiddleheads with cooked pasta.



Spring Lemon Risotto with Asparagus & Fiddleheads

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups fiddlehead ferns
- 1 1/2 cups asparagus tips
- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large leeks, white & light green parts only, washed well, and diced.
- 2 scallions, white parts only, minced.
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 2 cups arborio or carnaroli rice
- 1/2 cup dry white wine approximately
- 5 1/2 cups hot vegetable or chicken stock
- zest of 1 large lemon
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Start by preparing the vegetables. Boil a medium sized pot of water, and have ready a large bowl of ice water. Thoroughly wash the fiddlehead ferns, then rub them in a kitchen towel to remove any of the brown paper-like chaff. Cut off any brown tips or blemishes. Rinse again if necessary. Blanch both the asparagus and fiddlehead ferns for about 2 minutes, until bright green, then plunge into the ice water bath to stop the cooking. Set aside. Bring the broth to a simmer, then cover and keep warm over medium-low heat. In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil and 1 1/2 tablespoons of butter over medium-high heat. Add the leeks, scallions, and garlic, and sauté until tender and almost translucent -- about 5 minutes

Add rice, and stir until grains are translucent at their edges but still opaque in the center, about 3 minutes. Add wine, and stir until liquid is almost completely absorbed. Add the warm stock by the cupful, stirring until rice has absorbed nearly all of the liquid before adding the next cup.

When rice is almost done (about 15 minutes), stir in the blanched and drained vegetables and the lemon zest. Stir in the last 1/2 cup of stock, then add the cheese and remaining butter. The risotto should be creamy and tender, and the vegetables cooked but with a remaining firm bite. Serve immediately. Note: fiddlehead ferns have a toxin that can cause stomach distress when eaten raw. This recipe lightly cooks them, leaving them with a toothsome crunch. The health department recommends cooking them for longer (10 to 15 minutes) so you may want to add them earlier so they cook longer. serves 4 to 6

Acadian Creamy Fiddlehead Soup

- 1-1/4 lb. (570 g) fiddleheads, cleaned well
- 4 cups (1 L) stock
- 1 cup (250 ml) evaporated milk
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. (2.5 ml) oregano
- ½ tsp. (2.5 ml) basil
- ½ cup (125 ml) celery, minced
- 1 tsp. (5 ml) parsley
- 1 cup (250 ml) applesauce
- 1-1/2 cups (375 ml) green tomatoes, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Purée all but ¼ cup (60 ml) of fiddleheads. Chop the remaining ¼ cup (60 ml) of fiddleheads into small pieces, set aside. Place all the ingredients in a large pot, except for the milk. Simmer until the larger pieces of fiddleheads are tender, about 40 minutes on low heat. Add milk and simmer 20 more minutes. Serve piping hot with crusty bread.

Creamy Fiddlehead and Cheese Casserole

- 1 recipe thin béchamel sauce (see recipe below)
- 1 lemon rind, zested
- ½ cup (125 ml) lemon juice
- 3 lbs. (1.4 kg) fiddleheads
- ½ cup (60 ml) parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ cup (60 ml) mozzarella cheese, grated
- 1 cup (250 ml) dry bread crumbs
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) Soya sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

Clean fiddleheads well and place in a shallow baking dish. Set aside. Make béchamel sauce as per recipe instructions. Remove from heat. To the béchamel sauce, add the lemon juice, zest, cheeses, Worcestershire, Soya sauce, salt and pepper. Stir well until evenly distributed. Pour sauce over fiddleheads. Sprinkle bread crumbs over top. Bake until bubbly and golden at 325° F (160° C) Serves 6-10

Fiddlehead Sauté

- 1 lb. (454 g) fiddleheads, cleaned
- ¼ cup (60 ml) clarified butter (see recipe below)
- ½ cup (125 ml) onion, finely minced
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. (15 ml) white sugar
- 1 tsp. (5 ml) paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a stainless steel* frying pan, heat butter over medium high heat. Fry onion and garlic for 2 minutes. Add fiddleheads and stir well. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, lemon juice, sugar and paprika, while stirring constantly. Sauté until fiddleheads are tender. About 3 to 5 minutes. Serves 4-8

* Green vegetables may sometimes react in certain types of cooking pans and turn darker or even black. They are still ok to eat but may be bitter to the tastebuds. To prevent this, make sure to cook all green vegetables in stainless steel rather than cast iron or aluminum.

Clarified Butter

Take butter and place it in a heat-proof container and then heat it slowly over low heat until the butter is melted completely. The butter will automatically separate itself into a clear golden liquid and the additives of the butter, being milk, salt, etc., will fall to the bottom. You must then skim off the golden liquid and discard the rest. The golden liquid is the clarified butter which contains the full butter flavour you are seeking to add to your dish

Thin Béchamel Sauce

(Depending on the recipe there are three consistencies of this sauce)

1 cup (250 ml) milk
2 tbsp. (30 ml) butter
1 tbsp. (15 ml) flour
Salt and pepper to taste

Thin: result of sauce is similar to the consistency of evaporated milk

Medium: result of sauce is similar to the consistency of honey

Thick: result of sauce is similar to the consistency of ketchup

Optional: 1 tbsp. (15 ml) of Soya sauce and/or Worcestershire sauce may be added. This will change the colour of the sauce beige rather than white.

Melt butter over low heat in a small, heavy saucepan. Add the flour and stir until it is absorbed. Cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Slowly add cold milk, a little at a time, whisking constantly until all flour is dissolved. Once all the flour has been absorbed in the milk, return pot to the heat. Increase the heat to medium, stirring constantly until the desired thickness is achieved (similar to the consistency of evaporated milk).

This sauce is a base for any dish requiring a creamy sauce. You may add any seasonings of choice, and then use it right away. You can use the sauce as a base for a casserole, cheese sauce or white gravy; a very versatile sauce base.

Roast Potatoes, Parsnips and Carrots

In my eyes, a good roast potato is one of the most important things in cooking. How is it that such a humble little vegetable can make people so happy? Have a go at this recipe - it will give you potatoes that are perfectly crispy on the outside and fluffy in the middle. The principle of parcooking in boiling water, then tossing in flavoured oil and roasting until deliciously golden and crisp, is just about the same for any other root veg,

particularly parsnips and carrots, so I've included these in this recipe too.

The best time to put the vegetables into the oven is about 40 minutes before the meat is ready to come out. While it rests there'll be more space in the oven and you'll be able to move the veg up to the top shelf to finish them off to perfection.

To prepare your vegetables

- If you're cooking these separately and not as with my perfect roast chicken, preheat your oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6
- Peel the vegetables and halve any larger ones lengthways
- Break the garlic bulb into cloves, leaving them unpeeled, and bash them slightly with the palm of your hand
- Pick the rosemary leaves from the woody stalks

To cook your vegetables

- Put the potatoes and carrots into a large pan - you may need to use two - of salted, boiling water on a high heat and bring back to the boil
 - Allow to boil for 5 minutes, then add the parsnips and cook for another 4 minutes
 - Drain in a colander and allow to steam dry
 - Take out the carrots and parsnips and put to one side
 - Fluff up the potatoes in the colander by shaking it around a little - it's important to 'chuff them up' like this if you want them to have all those lovely crispy bits when they're cooked
 - Put a large roasting tray over a medium heat and either add a few generous lugs of olive oil or carefully spoon a little of the fat from the meat you're cooking
 - Add the garlic and rosemary leaves
 - Put the vegetables into the tray with a good pinch of salt and pepper and stir them around to coat them in the flavours
 - Spread them out evenly into one layer - this is important, as you want them to roast, not steam as they will if you have them all on top of each other
- serves 4-6

Parsnip and Pancetta Tagliatelle with Parmesan and Butter

Parsnip and pancetta together are slightly unusual but make a bloody good combo. Since discovering how well they work I've been using them in soups, risottos, roasts and casseroles.

In a large, non-stick frying pan, fry your pancetta and herbs in half the butter for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and parsnips. Cook for a further 3 minutes on a medium heat, until the pancetta is slightly golden and the parsnips have softened nicely. Cook your tagliatelle in salted boiling water according to packet instructions, then drain, reserving a little of the cooking water. Mix the pasta with the parsnips and pancetta and stir in the rest

of your butter and the Parmesan, adding a little of the cooking water to loosen the mixture and make it creamy and shiny. Season to taste.

:

ingredients

- 12 slices of pancetta or dry-cured smoked streaky bacon
 - 1 handful of fresh rosemary, thyme or summer savory, leaves picked
 - 4 good knobs of butter
 - 2 cloves of garlic, peeled & finely sliced
 - 2 parsnips, peeled, halved and finely sliced lengthways
 - 455g dried tagliatelle
 - 3 good handfuls of grated Parmesan cheese
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper serves 4

Asparagus, Mint and Lemon Risotto

This is such a simple, clean and delicious risotto. When buying asparagus, have a look around because there are lots of varieties available now - purple-tipped, white, thin straggly Japanese, wild Spanish and dozens of good locally grown English. In this recipe the stalks are finely sliced to an inch below the tips - this will give you lots of flavour from the stalks and you'll then have those whole beautiful tips as a bit of a prize! There are variations on this risotto that I love to do, like sprinkling in a little picked crab or lobstermeat or fresh, peeled prawns or sliced scallops - all of these work particularly well with asparagus if you fancy a little upgrade. (If you do decide to add any of these seafood suggestions then reduce your Parmesan by half.)

Finely chop your asparagus stalks into tiny discs, keeping the tips whole. Then start making your basic risotto recipe.

Stage 1: Bring the stock to a simmer in a saucepan. Put the olive oil and butter in a separate large pan, add the onion and celery and cook very gently for about 15 minutes, without colouring, until soft. Add the rice (it will sizzle) and turn up the heat. Don't let the rice or veg catch on the bottom of the pan, so keep it moving.

Stage 2: Quickly pour in the vermouth or wine. You will smell the alcohol immediately, so keep stirring all the time until it has evaporated, leaving the rice with a lovely perfume.

Stage 3: Add the stock to the rice a ladle at a time, stirring and waiting until it has been fully absorbed before adding the next. Turn the heat down to low so the rice doesn't cook too quickly, otherwise the outside of each grain will be stodgy and the inside hard and nutty (you don't want to cook it too slowly either, or it will turn into rice pudding!) and continue to add ladlefuls of stock until it has all been absorbed. This should take about 14 to 15

minutes and give you rice that is beginning to soften but is still a little al dente. Put to one side.

Now put a large saucepan on a medium to high heat and pour in half the stock, followed by all your risotto base and the finely sliced asparagus stalks and the tips. Stirring all the time, gently bring to the boil, then turn the heat down and simmer until almost all the stock has been absorbed. Add the rest of the stock a ladleful at a time until the rice and asparagus are cooked. You might not need all your stock. Be careful not to overcook the rice - check it throughout cooking to make sure it's a pleasure to eat. It should hold its shape but be soft, creamy and oozy, and the overall texture should be slightly looser than you think you want it.

Turn off the heat, beat in your butter and Parmesan, mint, almost all the lemon zest and all the juice. Check the seasoning and add salt and pepper if needed. Put a lid on the pan and leave the risotto to rest for a minute. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil, a scattering of lemon zest and a block of Parmesan on the table. Serves 8

Savoury Sweet Potato Sticks

Ingredients:

3 medium sweet potatoes
3 cups KELLOGG'S RICE KRISPIES cereal, crushed
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
4 egg whites
4 tablespoons water

Wash sweet potatoes (or peel if desired). Cut lengthwise into 1 cm (1/2-inch) slices. Cut slices into 1 cm (1/2-inch) sticks. In large plate or shallow pan, mix together crushed cereal and seasonings. Place flour on second plate. In medium bowl, beat egg whites and water. Coat potatoes with flour, shaking off excess. Next dip in egg mixture, then coat with cereal mixture. Place in single layer on a baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for about 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve hot with salsa or roasted garlic mayonnaise if desired.

SOURCE: Crafty Mom Cooks

www.acraftymomeats.blogspot.com

This FABULOUS sweetpotato recipe (bottom left) originally came from the back of a Kellogg's box! Great blog to check out regularly as this crafty mom gets a lifeorganic box!

BOK CHOY - One of Nature's "Fast Foods"

Extremely versatile, highly nutritious, and easy to cook, these wondrous Asian greens suit stir-frying, steaming, poaching, or adding to braises, curries, and soups. Unless braising whole or halved, bok choy generally require little cooking - a brief steam or stir-fry is all that is required.

Varieties

Bok Choy is often referred to as Chinese White Cabbage, however it is related to the Chard family. There are more than 20 varieties of Bok Choy available in Asia, including Pai Tsai, Shanghai, Pak Choy, Lei Choy and Canton Pak Choi. All of these varieties can be identified by their dark green leaves and white ribs, except for the Shanghai varieties, which produce light green ribs and leaves.

Storage

Not only are they fast to cook (and eat), but they are very quick to wilt. Because of their high water content, Bok Choy do not store well, so if possible it is best to use them as you buy them. Otherwise, they can be stored in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.

Origin

Although part of the huge and diverse genes Brassica (along with cabbage, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, among others), bok choy (*Brassica rapa* var. *chinensis*) and other Chinese cabbages belong to a different species from the green head cabbage that we are familiar with.

Asian greens, such as bok choy, are eaten by more than half the world's population up to three times every day, however they have only fairly recently become familiar to Western countries. Bok choy has been cultivated in China since ancient times and was introduced to North America in the late nineteenth century.

Nutritional and Medicinal Properties

Rich in fiber, vitamins A and C, bok choy are also high in B vitamins, particularly folate - an essential nutrient for pregnant women and women of childbearing age. It is a great nutritional powerhouse, and often referred to as the garden vegetable highest in calcium. All of this for only 24 calories per one-cup serving!
Basic Cooking Instructions

Both the leaves and stalks of bok choy are tender, and impart a mild cabbage flavour. This vegetable can be cooked on its own, or added to stir-fry dishes, soups, salads and side dishes where its flavour blends nicely with a magnitude of other foods. Bok Choy is good boiled, steamed, sautéed, stir-fried and raw. To prepare, separate ribs and rinse under cold running water to remove trapped dirt particles, drain and chop as desire. Like most leafy greens, Bok Choy reduces in volume as it cooks and can be prepared in as little as 2-3 minutes! It can also be easily substituted in recipes calling for cabbage, spinach or chard. One of nature's most versatile "fast foods"!

Carolyn Frail, B.A., B.A.Sc., P.H.Ec.,

Thomas' Utopia Tomato Products.

Thomas' Utopia is a relatively small, Ontario owned and operated company based in Maidstone, Ontario. All the tomatoes used in their products are 100% Ontario grown. Support Ontario's local producers!

Thank you! Thank you, for remembering to clean out your bins and glass bottles before leaving them out for our driver.

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