

Food From the Field

Local farmers and home gardeners grow sweetpotatoes for their large, flavorful roots. What many people don't know is the leaves and stems can be harvested throughout the growing season for delicious and nutritious greens.

The greens are as nutritious as other dark, leafy greens and can be used in a variety of cooking applications. Try looking for sweetpotato greens at your local farmers' market or growing sweetpotatoes and enjoy the nutritious and delicious produce for months!

Harvesting Sweetpotato Greens

About 2 months after planting, sweetpotato vines and leaves can be harvested throughout the remaining growing season. Harvest vine tips about every 10-15 days. Greens can be harvested until root harvest if the vines are green and healthy. Be aware that harvesting greens frequently can reduce sweetpotato root yield.

Once ready, cut the vine tips, about 6 to 8 inches. Avoid the older and larger vines as they can be more bitter and tough.

Be aware that vines and leaves produce a sticky sap that may be irritating to the skin. Gloves can be worn while harvesting to prevent skin irritation and for easier cleanup.

Storage

Sweetpotato greens can be stored in the refrigerator for 1–2 weeks after harvest. Wrap the greens in a dry paper towel and store in an open plastic bag in the refrigerator. If the greens wilt, they are still good for cooking!

Cooking with Sweetpotato Greens

Sweetpotato greens can be used any way you would use spinach! Raw leaves and stems may have a strong flavor and can be slightly bitter without cooking. Newer vines and leaves will be less bitter and more tender.

- Blanch greens for freezing by adding to boiling water for 1-2 minutes and immediately transfer to ice water. Drain, pat dry, and freeze for future cooking.
- Sauté greens in a little bit of olive oil and garlic.
- Add a bit of soy sauce or vinegar to cooked greens for a delicious side dish.
- Newer vines and shoots are perfect for eating raw in salads.
- Add cooked greens to omelets, stir-fries, soup or curry.

Nutritious and Delicious!

Sweetpotato leaves and stems are abundant in vital minerals, vitamins, and chemical compounds that make them as nutritious as other dark green leafy greens and yellow vegetables. Nutrient composition can differ due to variety and harvest date.

Here are some nutrient highlights of sweetpotato greens, based on the sweetpotato variety *Suiroh*:

- *Calcium* – helps maintain strong bones and lowers blood pressure. Sweetpotato greens provide roughly 117 milligrams (mg) of calcium per 100 grams (g) of fresh weight.
- *Iron* – is important for healthy blood and hormones. Sweetpotato greens contain roughly 1.8 mg per 100 g fresh weight.
- *Vitamin C* – is needed for the growth and repair of tissues in the body, supports our immune system, and is a powerful antioxidant. Sweetpotato greens contain roughly 7.2 mg per 100 g fresh weight.
- *Polyphenols* – Sweetpotato leaves contain much higher levels of polyphenols than other commercial vegetables, which are anti-inflammatory, antioxidants and have cancer-fighting properties



Enjoying Sweetpotato Greens

Who doesn't want to enjoy fresh produce throughout the entire summer and use as much of your growing plant as possible?

Surprise your friends and family by cooking a delicious meal featuring sweetpotato greens!

Coconut Curry with Sweetpotato Greens

1 large bunch sweetpotato greens, chopped	1 tablespoon curry powder
1 tablespoon olive oil	1 teaspoon soy sauce
1 small onion	2 14-oz cans coconut milk
4 cloves garlic, minced	1 cup vegetable broth
1 tablespoon grated ginger	Salt and pepper, to taste
½ cup each sliced carrots, tomato, bell pepper	

Heat a large pot to medium heat, add the olive oil, onions, garlic, ginger, carrots, bell pepper, and sweetpotato greens and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add curry powder, soy sauce, coconut milk and vegetable broth, and stir. Bring to a simmer and slightly lower the heat. Simmer for 10-15 minutes. Adjust taste with salt and pepper. Serve over rice, and garnish with lemon juice and lemongrass (optional).

Sweetpotato Greens for a Healthier Lifestyle

Sweetpotato leaves are considered an indigenous vegetable common in many African and Asian countries. Sweetpotato greens have anti-diabetic compounds that reduce blood glucose levels. The high levels of antioxidants reduce the development of cancer. Sweetpotato greens also contain high levels of amino acids and are a useful protein source. They are also high in soluble dietary fiber, which is essential for a healthy and balanced diet. Sweetpotato greens are rich in many other vitamins and minerals, such as potassium, magnesium, zinc, copper, β -carotene, vitamin B₂, and vitamin E.

As individuals are encouraged to adapt to more healthy food consumption patterns, sweetpotato greens can be used as a key nutritional component to improve health and reduce risks associated with chronic illnesses and cardiovascular disease.

Growing your own food such as sweetpotatoes has added benefits, including improving your physical health, reducing stress and anxiety, and increasing your healthy eating.

Enjoying locally grown produce enhances your community by supporting small farmers and preserving the environment. Try finding sweetpotato greens at your local farmers market and enjoy local produce!



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Sweetpotato Greens

A delicious way to eat the whole plant!