

Fruit and Veggie of the Month

Orange

Oranges are highly valued for their vitamin C content. The orange is a primary source of vitamin C for most Americans. This wonderful fruit has more to offer nutritionally than just this one nutrient, thus containing sufficient amounts of folacin, calcium, potassium, thiamin, niacin and magnesium. Most of the consumption of oranges is in the form of juice. Eating the whole fruit provides 140% of the recommended dietary allowance for vitamin C, less than the juice, but with more fiber, which is not present in most juices. The fruit is technically a hesperidium, a kind of berry. Florida is the number one citrus producer, producing 70% of the United States crop. Varieties of the fruit include the sweet orange, the sour orange, and the mandarin orange, or tangerine. One medium orange contains 70 calories and 3 grams of fiber.



Greens

Cooking greens are a Southern tradition- and superstitiously thought to bring good luck for the upcoming year when eaten on New Year's Day. They include any type of cabbage where the leaves do not form a compact head. Collard, mustard, kale, Swiss chard, and broccoli rabe are all varieties of cooking greens.

Collards are the oldest known greens in the cabbage family dating back to ancient times because of their similarity to cabbage eaten by prehistoric people. In addition, ancient Greeks and Romans cultivated collard greens.

Collards are native to the eastern Mediterranean region and Asia Minor. In approximately 400 B.C., they were brought to Britain and France by either the Romans or Celts. The first documentation of collard greens in America was in 1669 though it is possible they were present in the colonies at an even earlier date.

Collard greens grow best in warm weather though they can withstand the cold temperatures of late autumn. Interestingly enough, the flavor of collard greens is enhanced by a light frost. They are at their peak from January through April.

Collard greens are an excellent source of fiber. One half cup provides 3 grams of fiber. They are a nutrient dense, low calorie vegetable. One half cup has only 25 calories and no fat. Collards are an excellent source of Vitamin A and potassium.