



# Using, Storing and Preserving Greens



Prepared by:  
Joyce McGarry, Extension educator

**G**reens are cool-season vegetables, quick to mature and easy to grow.

## Recommended varieties

Spinach, mustard, Swiss chard, collards

## Storage and Food Safety

Young, tender greens can be eaten raw or cooked. Store unwashed greens in moist paper towels and place in sealed plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. They will keep about three to four days. When ready to use, wash thoroughly. Greens tend to have dirt and grit on the leaves, so wash in several changes of cool water.

To prevent cross-contamination, keep greens away from raw meat and meat juices.

Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

For best quality and nutritional value, do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

## How to Preserve

### Canning

Vegetables must be canned in a pressure canner to guarantee their safety.

Greens may be canned, but freezing results in a better product. Choose fresh, tender leaves.

**Hot pack** – Wash thoroughly in several changes of water. Cut out tough, woody stems. Blanch 1 pound of greens at a time until well wilted (about 3 to 5 minutes). Pack hot greens loosely into hot jars, leaving 1 of inch headspace. Add 1/4 teaspoon salt to pints, 1/2 teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from the top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process.

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Recommended process time for greens in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure at altitudes of:			
		0-2,000 ft	2,001-4,000 ft	4,001-6,000 ft	6,001-8,000 ft
Pints	70 min	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.
Quarts	90 min	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.

Recommended process time for greens in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure at altitudes of:	
		0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Pints	70 min	10 lb.	15 lb.
Quarts	90 min	10 lb.	15 lb.

### Freezing

**Preparation** – Select young, tender green leaves. Wash thoroughly and cut off woody stems.

Water blanch collard greens 3 minutes; all other greens, 2 minutes.

- **Water blanching** – Use 1 gallon of water per pound of prepared greens. Put the greens in a blanching basket or metal strainer and lower into a large pot of rapidly boiling water. Cover. Wait for water to return to boiling. Start counting blanching time when water returns to a full boil. It should take only a minute to come back to a boil. If it takes longer, too many greens have been added to the boiling water.
- **Cooling** – As soon as the water blanching is complete, greens should be placed in ice-cold water. Change water often or use cold running water or ice water. Cooling greens should take the same amount of time as blanching. Drain greens very well and carefully pat dry, then pack into containers or freezer bags, removing as much air as possible, and allowing for 1/2 inch of headspace. Label and date containers, and freeze.

### References

Wolford, R., and D. Banks. 2013. "Collards." Watch Your Garden Grow. University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Available at [urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/collards.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/veggies/collards.cfm).

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