

Swiss Chard 101

- Swiss chard is a member of the beet family and is considered to be an annual vegetable.
- Plant seedlings after all danger of frost is past. *The expected last frost date for spring in southeastern Michigan is April 30.*
- Swiss chard tolerates full to part sun and prefers soils high in organic matter. The leafy green plants grow 1-2 feet tall and wide.
- Both the leaves and colorful stems are edible and can be eaten raw, steamed or stir-fried.
- Harvest at any time. Young leaves are best for eating raw in salads. Once the leaves reach 12 inches long, they are better suited for cooking. Remove the outer large leaves with a sharp knife or garden shears. Doing so, encourages new growth.
- Once the plant bolts and goes to flower, the leaves become tough and bitter. Add bolted plants to the compost bin.
- Common pests and diseases
 - Cercospora leaf spot – a fungal disease that causes the leaves to yellow and die when the weather turns warm and humid
 - Treatment - remove infected leaves or if badly infected, remove the entire plant
 - Leafminers – feed on the surface of the leaves
 - Treatment – remove infected leaves or if badly infected, remove the entire plant
 - Root-knot nematodes – small colorless roundworms that infect the plant's roots causing the plant to wilt
 - Treatment – pull up the plant and inspect roots for knotty spots. Discard infected plants. Crop rotation to another area of the garden can prevent future problems.



Swiss Chard

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