

Nutrition can be found in garden

Vegetables for health

High in Vitamin A	High in Vitamin C	High in Potassium (over 200 milligrams)	High in Vitamins A and C	Good source of vitamins, minerals and fiber
Carrots	Sweet corn	Asparagus	Beets	Parsley
Green onions	Peas	Potatoes	Brussels sprouts	Dark lettuce
Pumpkin	Potatoes	Asparagus	Cauliflower	Spinach
Sweet potatoes	High in Vitamin C	Brussels Sprouts	Corn	Turnip greens
Swiss chard	Asparagus	Cabbage	Greens	
Winter squash	Brussels Sprouts	Cauliflower	Peas	
High in Folate	Cabbage	Chinese Cabbage	Potatoes	
Asparagus	Cauliflower	Green peppers	Pumpkin	Beets
Broccoli	Chinese Cabbage	Kohlrabi	Spinach	Celery
Dried beans	Green peppers	Potatoes	Summer squash	Cucumbers
Salad greens	Kohlrabi	Tomatoes	Winter squash	Eggplant
Spinach	Potatoes	High in Potassium (over 200 milligrams)	High in Vitamins A and C	Green beans
Turnip greens	Tomatoes	Asparagus	Broccoli	Lettuce
Starchy vegetables	High in Potassium (over 200 milligrams)		Collards	Okra
Beans (limas, kidney, etc.)	Asparagus		Kale	Onions
			Mustard greens	Summer squash

By Carol C. Giesecke

Some people regard winter as a time to get out the seed catalogs and dream about the wonderful vegetables they are going to plant when spring comes. Others get a thrill out of buying vegetable plants from the Master Gardener Plant sale on the DSU campus in late April.

However you decide to do it, the best part about growing your own vegetables is eating them, and anticipating their great flavor. The USDA MyPyramid recommends eating at least three servings of vegetables a day (1/2 cup raw or cooked vegetable, a medium potato or carrot, or 1 cup leafy salad greens each equal one serving). And they are so good for you.

Although not as quick to produce food for you as most vegetables, there are many berries, too, that are wonderful for health. Blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries are all good sources of cancer-fighting phytochemicals — antioxidants that can help protect your cells from free radicals. That is an article for another time.

Here are some of the reasons to grow and eat your vegetables:

1. Vegetables are low in calories, so they are great if you are trying to control your weight. They contain very little fat, protein or carbohydrate — the nutrients that give us food energy, or calories. Vegetables are made mostly of water and some carbohydrate — mostly fiber and a little starch and sometimes a little natural sugar.

Potatoes, corn, peas, dried beans and legumes are higher in protein and carbohydrates so they are also higher in calories than other vegetables. The fiber in vegetables helps fill you up and is helpful in lowering risk for disease. Although the mechanisms are still being examined, several research studies have indicated that increased fiber intake can lower insulin resistance and, thus, reduce the likelihood that a person will develop type-2 diabetes.

Certain biochemical indicators of heart disease are also reduced with adequate fiber intake.

2. Vegetables are high in vitamins essential for everyday life and health. Vegetables are some of the best foods for finding vitamin A (carotene), vitamin C and folate.

3. Vegetables are high in minerals. The amount of certain min-

Garden Tales



Submitted photo

These tomatoes, cultivated by the Cooperative Extension at the DSU Outreach and Research Center, taste great and are loaded with essential nutrients.

erals found in vegetables will depend on the mineral content of the soil. Minerals are needed to regulate your body's processes.

All vegetables contain potassium, and some are good sources of calcium (dark, leafy greens and broccoli), magnesium and trace levels of zinc. Fresh vegetables are low in sodium, a mineral that is contained in salt, but fresh beet, greens and chard have higher amounts.

4. Vegetables can help lower your risk for chronic disease. People who eat plenty of vitamin-rich, high-fiber vegetables have lower rates of cancer and heart disease, including high blood pressure, especially when combined with a lower fat diet and a healthy lifestyle (enough exercise, no smoking).

It's important to eat the vegetables, as just taking supplements (vitamins, anti-oxidants) does not show the same positive effect.

Remember to store fresh vegetables in a cool, dry place after harvesting to keep the nutrients. Most vegetables should be refrigerated for use within a week. Folate and vitamin C lose their potency in warm temperatures, or when cooked too long in too much water. If you have a bumper crop, share with family and friends and/or call Delaware Cooperative Extension about ways to preserve the extra vegetables.

Editor's note: Dr. Carol C. Giesecke is a registered dietitian and the state specialist for Nutrition, Consumer Economics and Health for Delaware State University Cooperative Extension. For more information on this and other nutrition-related issues, contact Dr. Giesecke at 302-857-6439, or cgiesecke@desu.edu.