

Swiss Chard

History

Swiss chard originates from a wild version of the beet that naturally grew in the Mediterranean. The original variety has been traced back to the largest Mediterranean island, Sicily. It was known by the ancient Greeks, but it is difficult to pinpoint chard in historical records because it went by many names similar to beets, spinach, kale, and greens. It began to appear in American and European gardens in the 1830s.

Chard can withstand cool temperatures, as it is harvested right before the first frost. Leaves come in all different colors- from white, to green, to red- and served like salad. The celery-like stem portion is referred to as the “rib” and can be treated like asparagus.

Unlike most vegetables, chard contains sodium- 300 milligrams per cup. However, it also has lots of calcium, magnesium, potassium, and vitamin A, which make it a healthy choice.

Varieties

Rhubarb has red stalks, poisonous raw leaves, and is typically baked like a fruit in sweet desserts, treats, and pies.

Bright lights have colorful and bright stems, as their name suggests.

Lucullus has white stems that can be cooked like asparagus or broccoli.

Fordhook Giant is a standard and mild type of green chard.

Fun Facts

- Swiss chard is also known as stem chard, spinach beet, leaf beet, white beet, seakale beet, and silver beet.
- Some gardeners choose to feature chard in their gardens because of the chard’s colorful stem and decorative large green leaves.
- Swiss chard does not originate in Switzerland- it was named by a Swiss botanist.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.