



Greetings from Plant It Forward!

As you read in the first newsletter, refugee farmers who join Plant It Forward go through a rigorous one-year long farmer training program before becoming certified Plant It Forward farmers. While in this program, farmers are taught organic growing methods, produce packaging methods, sales, marketing and business skills.

Farmers are required to attend four hours of classes at the farm every Saturday. While in these classes, they learn many things about farming organically in Houston: how to build raised beds, harmful versus beneficial organisms, when and how seeds should be planted, composting, organic gardening products, weeding, proper harvesting methods, how to prevent diseases on plants, etc. They are all assigned beds on the training farm at Fondren and Willowbend and are “graded” on how their beds are kept. They must keep their beds weeded, label what has been planted, and be sure to plant seeds at the right times for the season.

Farmers are also required to work for five paid hours each week. The farmers in the training program can fulfill these hours either by working on the farm, helping prepare the harvest at the warehouse, or working at the farmers market on Saturdays.

The first group of Plant It Forward Farmers graduated in earlier this spring and the new group of Plant It Forward farmers in training began the program during the summer.



First Graduating class of Plant It Forward Farmers.



New group of farmers in training displaying dream boards they made during orientation.

Enjoy!

Kassy Rodriguez, Community Supported Agriculture Manager

Recipes

Try out the recipes below or find more using our recipe finder: <http://plant-it-forward.org/farm-kitchen/favorite-recipes/>

Chicken Pho Recipe

Chef Gina Lopez, Bridgeway Corporate Chef

Chicken Broth

1 chicken
5 quarts of water
2 onions, halved
1 3-4 inch chunk of ginger
1 tsp. whole coriander seeds
1 tsp. whole cloves
4 whole star anise
2 Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. fish sauce
1 stick of cinnamon

Vegetables

Bok Choy quartered
Carrots sliced thin
Kale chopped
Radishes sliced thin
Beans whole
Noodles prepared according to package

Garnish

Sliced green onion
roughly chopped cilantro
jalapenos
mung beans
Thai basil
sliced limes
siracha

Place chicken in water and bring to a boil. Make sure to skim off stuff at the top of boiling water for a clear broth. Roast ginger and onions in oven until toasted. Place coriander, star anise, and cloves in dry pan and toast on low heat until fragrant. Place all spices in a cheese cloth and tie up. Place onions, ginger, and cheese cloth in boiling water. Let boil for about 2 to 3 hours. Remove chicken to debone and shred meat. Place water on low heat add vegetables put carrots in first and let cook till tender then add other vegetables about 3 min before serving. Place noodles and shredded chicken in bowl add vegetables and broth. Top with garnishes. Enjoy.

Vegetarian “Southern-Style” Collard Greens

Ingredients

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. butter
½ large onion, chopped
1 tsp. red pepper flakes
1 clove garlic, pressed
1 lb. collard greens, chopped
3 cups vegetable stock
2 tomatoes, chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

Prepare the collard greens by cutting off the course stem, then cutting across the leaves making thin strips. In a large pot over medium heat, heat oil and butter. Sauté the onions until lightly softened, about 2 minutes, then add the red pepper flakes, garlic and cook another minute. Add the vegetable stock, cover, and bring to a simmer. Cook until greens are tender, about 40 minutes. Add tomatoes and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

–Recipe from www.foodnetwork.com

Black-eyed Peas with Kale

Ingredients

2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
~1/2 roasted red pepper, chopped
1 medium carrot, scrubbed and chopped small
1/2 tsp. powdered cumin
1/8 tsp. powdered cayenne pepper (more to taste)
1/2 tsp. smoked sweet paprika (more to taste)
16-ounce bag frozen black-eyed peas or 1 ½ cups dried black-eyed peas soaked over night
2-3 cups diced potatoes - wash, scrub (do not peel), chopped
1-2 bunches of kale, stems removed
8 cups vegetable stock
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

Cook potato pieces and carrot pieces together in enough water to cover in a medium-size pot until they can be pierced with a fork. Check 10 minutes after water comes to a boil. Drain when done and set aside. While potatoes and carrots are cooking, place oil in a large Dutch oven or soup pot over medium heat. Add the chopped onion, garlic, and peppers and cook until tender, about 3-5 minutes. Add the cumin, cayenne, and smoked paprika seasonings. Cook stirring for 1 minute. Do not burn garlic or seasonings. Add the vegetable broth, black-eyed peas, cooked potatoes and carrots. Bring all to a boil; reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, for ~15-20 minutes until broth and ingredients are heated through. Add kale and simmer for another 10-15 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasonings if necessary.

<http://www.365daysofkale.com/2009/02/soup-black-eyed-peas-with-kale.html>

Spicy Bok Choy with Sesame Seeds

Ingredients

2 heads bok choy split in half lengthwise

2.5 Tbsp. oyster sauce

½ Tbsp. siracha

Neutral oil such as canola or grape seed

Soy sauce to taste

Sesame seeds, toasted (optional) for garnish

Instructions

1. Heat large skillet (cast iron if you have it) over medium-high heat. Whisk together oyster sauce and siracha. Add more siracha if it is too watery. Brush 1/3 of the sauce onto the cut side of the bok choy halves.
2. Put the cut side of the bok choy down in the pan and sear for two minutes. While the bok choy is cooking, brush the tops with another 1/3 of the sauce. Flip the bok choy and sear the rounded sides for another 2 minutes.
3. Remove the bok choy and arrange the halves on a platter. Add soy sauce to the remaining sauce and drizzle over bok choy, then sprinkle with sesame seeds.