



## The Young Citizen Pantry



Leaves are good food because they contain substances that help to keep us well, that make the blood red, and that help make strong, hard bones and teeth.

When we cook leaves they should be: (1) *fresh*, not wilted; (2) *young and tender*, not old, big, and tough. If leaves are picked from the plant some time before they are to be cooked, they should be washed and kept in water until time to cook them.

When leaves are young they are tender and easy to eat; when they are old and big they are tough and stringy, or sometimes hot and bitter, and are not pleasant to eat.

The leaves should not be too small or too large. In some places leafy vegetables like pechay are allowed to grow very large; then the plant is pulled up and all but the largest leaves are used. A better way is to pick the leaves every few days and

### LEAVES FOR FOOD

use all that are then large enough to eat. When this is done each plant goes on producing leaves for a longer time, but when the plant is allowed to grow until some of the leaves are too large to eat and is then pulled up, some leaves are wasted, and the plant produces no more leaves.

If possible, it is better to pick the leaves from the plant just before they are to be cooked. If one grows them in a garden, this can be done.

The leaves should then be washed and cooked immediately, as soon as they are picked.

When leaves are purchased from the market they should be washed as soon as they are brought home, and put to soak in cold water until time to cook them.

Leaves should be cooked whole. If they need to be cut up, the cutting should be done *after* they are cooked.

The same method is used for cooking different kinds of leaves. First, they are carefully washed clean. Then they are dropped into salted boiling water and boiled until tender. It is necessary that the water be boiling when the leaves are dropped into the kettle, and that it be kept boiling until they are taken out.

The following are some of the leaves which may be cooked: pechay, mustard, beet tops,

(Turn to page 77.)



Some Leaves Used for Food

## YOUNG CITIZEN PANTRY

*(Continued from page 59)*

turnip tops, spinach, cabbage, and camote. (See the illustration on page 59.)

The reason one should not cut the leaves into pieces before cooking, is that if they are cut into small pieces, they are exposed to the air and there is greater destruction of the vitamins while cooking. More minerals dissolve in the water also. If leaves are used for food before they get large and tough, there is no reason for cutting them into small pieces before cooking.

The exact time required for cooking leaves depends, of course, upon the age and toughness of the leaves. Very young, tender leaves may be cooked in eight or ten minutes. Use just enough water so that when the leaves are done there will be only enough to moisten them. When such water is used, food materials dissolve out of the leaves into the water, and so are lost.

A very small amount of fat may be added to the leaves when they are put on to cook. The purpose of the fat is to absorb the fine flavor. Fat absorbs flavors.

After the leaves are cooked done they may be served whole. It is not necessary to chop them into small pieces.

Leaves are more delicious if served hot. Therefore, when preparing them, they should be put on to cook in time for them to be ready just before the meal is to be served.

Leaves may be served as a separate vegetable dish.

Some persons like them better with a few drops of lemon juice squeezed over them, or vinegar. This should, of course, be done by the individual eating rather than by someone in the kitchen.

Leaves may be cooked and served with other food such as meat. If the meat is to cook 45 minutes, the leaves should be added only 10, 15, or 20 minutes before the meat is done. They should not cook the whole 45 minutes.

Lettuce is one of the leafy vegetables. It is one of the best of these foods. It is so tender and delicate that it may be eaten raw when we are sure it has grown on ground which is not contaminated with disease germs that come from filth. When we are not sure that the lettuce is safe to eat raw, it should be cooked a few minutes.

Lettuce leaves are very tender and delicate if they are the right age and size, so they should be cooked only a short time. A good way to cook lettuce is to wilt it.

Lettuce is commonly served raw as a salad, or a part of a mixed salad dish. The crisp leaves appeal to the eye and to the palate. It is probably more desirable to serve lettuce raw, since then no nutrients (food substances) are lost; but in case there is any doubt as to whether it can safely be eaten raw, it may be wilted.

Lettuce is a valuable food. It is appetizing. It is nutritious because it is a good source of vitamins.