

Just in case you missed it, October's Harvest of the Month crop is collard greens! In honor of this crop, Rosa Key, long-time Charlottesville resident and Community Advocate with the Food Justice Network, shared two of her basic recipes for cooking collards. In her own words, she "grew up eating them, planting them, picking them, washing them and cooking them," and while she's not giving all her secrets away, read on for two tried and true methods of preparing collard greens.



Old fashioned style:

- Pick the greens by hand, make sure you take the stem out.
- Wash them real good, and put them in the water to boil for 20 minutes.
- Then, take the greens out and put them in a clean pot with more clean water and boil again.
- Add your ham hock (wash it off good first) when its halfway cooked. You can add onions, garlic and cubed potatoes now too if you want.
- Then let her rip! Collard greens take a long time to cook, about four hours, 'til they're nice and tender.

Be sure to make up some old fashioned cornbread with whole corn kernels mixed in to go with this recipe. And deep fry up some whiting fish too if you want a real meal! For dessert, get yourself an apple pie with a scoop of French vanilla ice cream.”



Rosa style:

- To start, roll up a stack of leaves and slice them with a knife, then wash it real good, at least twice to get all the dirt off it.
- Put the greens in a pot with water, cover and let it boil for at least 20 minutes.
- Next, take them back out, put the greens in a clean pot with chicken broth, enough to cover them (not water! That's the old way), and let it boil.
- Halfway through, wash your country ham (or country-style bacon) and put it in the pot.
- Add cubed potatoes, garlic and onions too, and cook 'til tender.

For this style, make up some sweet cornbread like Miss Jiffy to have with your meal. Just like with the old fashioned style, fry up some whiting fish too while you're at it, and don't forget the apple pie with French vanilla ice cream for dessert.”

The Urban Agriculture Collective team put the greens at the 6th Street garden under cover at the beginning of October to ward off a curious "Peter Rabbit" and the row cover created the perfect conditions for some accelerated growth.



Collards are an amazing crop for so many reasons– delicious, nutritious, and (with the right planning) can be grown in central Virginia year-round. In fact, collards and other leafy greens grown in frosty weather are even more delicious than their summer-time counterparts. Plants like collards respond to cold weather by accumulating more sugars in their leaves, thus lowering their freezing point and helping them survive winter weather. So be sure to treat yourself to this amazing green year-round, and don't forget to share a plate with your friends and neighbors.

