

Chives



My chives were the first thing to come up in my herb garden every year. As soon as the snow melted I could see their little heads popping up through the soil. By the time it was warm enough to actually get out in my garden and clean with a rake, the chives would be high enough that I had to work around them. They'd be three inches tall already.

My patch of chives was about two square feet. That's enough to service an entire restaurant! I sort of let my patch of chives grow beyond my eating ability to keep up. There are only so many things you can garnish with chives, or bake chives into. And since I don't eat a lot of baked potatoes, I don't have an excuse to sprinkle them on top of those either.

I still love my chives though. I think they are beautiful in any garden.

In early May (in the Midwest), the chives will bloom. They get little purple pom-pom flowers. They will remind you of the big purple alliums. In fact, they are part of the same family – the onion family and garlic too. I love to use the flowers in little floral arrangements on the table. I also chop the little flowers, or pluck them apart to use them in spring salads. I

garnish a lot of dishes all summer long with a few stems of chives. They have an Asian look to them so it's a graceful garnish.

When my chives get overgrown and start to droop and get unruly, I get out a pair sheers. For a small patch it might just be a scissors. For my big patch I used to get out a long bush-trimming sheers. I chop the tops off and take them down to about three to four inches high and just let them grow up again. I call it giving them a haircut. The scent they send off into the garden feels herbal to me, but not like an overpowering onion scent. It just feels like garden to me and I love that smell that lingers for a few days.

If you do a little internet search you'll find out about all the amazing properties of chives. Things like: they are a powerful anti-oxidant so eating them will help you prevent cancer. They are good for bone health and improved circulation. Chives are an anti-inflammatory. They will help you prevent bruising and help heal wounds faster. All these things from eating chives. Eating chives will help you improve your skin so it's more radiant and they will help you clear up acne. If you puree chives you can use them as a face mask. Just smear them on your face in the pureed form, let set for 30 minutes, wash and then put on moisturizer.

I might do that this summer when my chives grow too tall and I have to give them a haircut. I'll have plenty of the cuttings, so I can make my mask.

When cooking with chives it's best to put them into the dish toward the end of cooking. They are delicate in stature but their flavor will quickly disperse through the dish. So if you are adding them to soup or stews add them at the end.

Chives are not only sculpturally beautiful in the garden, their

usefulness abounds.

Here's a Chive biscuit recipe that lends itself to a sprinkling of chives right before you bake them. A nice little onion-ish flavor will result.

Enjoy!

Cheers,