

## SWISS CHARD (*Beta vulgaris*)



Full Sun



### The culture of Swiss Chard

A member of the same group as the common beet, chard has a smaller, nonbulbous root. It is grown for its finely textured leaves which are used as a cooked green, like spinach. The leaf-vein is sometimes cooked alone like asparagus. Like beets and clover, chard is a very deep-rooted plant so it is useful in a garden where the subsoil requires aeration. Roots are known to penetrate as deep as six feet in a single season.

Chard will grow in any good garden soil in which lettuce thrives. It will do well in soil amply supplied with humus, in an open, sunny, well-drained location. Since it is slow to bolt, chard is often grown as a substitute for spinach during hot weather.

### Planting Swiss Chard

Plants should be spaced 12 inches apart in the row. A row 15 to 25 feet long is usually sufficient for a family of four, and may be expected to supply greens for cooking from July until frost. In very hot regions, plants may show a tendency to become exhausted, that is, to produce smaller leaves after a period of growth.

When this happens, new seed may be planted for harvesting in a month to six weeks.

### Harvesting Swiss Chard

To harvest, gently pull the outer leaves from each plant. Within a week, the inner leaves will have reached harvest size and a new set will be developing. As long as the roots are not severed and the plants are kept thinned, chard will produce greens throughout the summer. To extend the season into winter, cover the plants with a deep layer of straw or similar mulch.

### Swiss Chard Varieties

The most common varieties are Fordhook Giant, Rhubarb Chard and Lucullus. All three are flavorful and heavy bearers.