



RHUBARB

WHY GROW IT

Rhubarb is a "love it or hate it" plant. But if you are a fan of its delicious tart flavor, you'll certainly want to put in a plant or two. The good news is that rhubarb is a perennial, guaranteeing a harvest of stalks year after year; the less good news is that you need to let your rhubarb grow for two full seasons before it's ready. Fortunately, with its huge, showy leaves and usually red-tinted stalks, rhubarb is a good-looking plant, just as much at home in your flower garden as your vegetable patch, so you can enjoy its ornamental attributes as you wait for it to mature.

WHEN TO HARVEST

In rhubarb's third growing season, you can pull off leafstalks for 4 to 5 weeks in spring; older, huskier plants can take up to 8 weeks of harvesting. At any one harvest, pick only as much as you plan to use in the next week. Grasp the leafstalks near the base and pull sideways and outward (do not cut with a knife, as cutting will leave a stub that decays). Never remove all the stalks from a single plant, and stop harvesting when slender leafstalks appear. Cut out any blossom stalks that appear.

HOW TO KEEP

Cut and discard leaves from the stalks (the leaves can be poisonous if eaten in large quantities). Refrigerate the stalks, unwashed, in a plastic bag for up to 1 week.



Rhubarb cardamom galette

SERVES 6 | 30 MINUTES

This dessert is wonderfully architectural, the long red stalks of rhubarb set against the buff color of the crisp pastry.

1 sheet (9 to 10 oz.) frozen puff pastry, thawed
3 tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
1 tbsp. packed brown sugar
1/4 tsp. ground cardamom
2 tbsp. flour
12 oz. rhubarb stalks (about 8 thin or 3 thick stalks), leaves trimmed and discarded
Sweetened whipped cream or ice cream

1. Preheat oven to 425° with a rack set on lowest rung. Unfold pastry onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. In a small bowl, mix together 1 tbsp. granulated sugar, the brown sugar, cardamom, and flour. Evenly sprinkle sugar mixture over pastry.

2. Trim rhubarb stalks 1 in. shorter than pastry, then split lengthwise into 1/2-in.-wide pieces. Lay pieces parallel across pastry square, leaving 1/2 in. border of pastry. Sprinkle rhubarb with remaining 2 tbsp. granulated sugar.

3. Bake galette until edges are golden brown and puffed, 12 to 15 minutes. Serve with sweetened whipped cream or ice cream.

PER SERVING 233 CAL., 48% (113 CAL.) FROM FAT; 4.5 G PROTEIN; 13 G FAT (3.4 G SAT.); 28 G CARBO (1.6 G FIBER); 222 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL. ■