

Spinach is a treat during summer and fall

Fresh Ontario spinach is now available, and with it comes the promise of summer.

Marketing specialists at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food tell us that spinach is the province's first leafy green to appear on the market. The peak season for Ontario spinach is from early June to mid-August, and from mid-September to late October. In 1981, about five million pounds of Ontario spinach were harvested. In fact, Ontario produces enough spinach to be self-sufficient from June to October.

Spinach is mechanically harvested and washed, then graded by hand. It's then put into bushels and shipped to packers to be bagged. Ontario spinach is marketed mostly in 10-ounce cellopack bags, which are available throughout the province. A small amount of fresh, bunched spinach may also be sold in specialty produce shops and markets.

When shopping for fresh spinach, look for clean, crisp, green leaves. To maintain freshness, refrigerate pre-packaged spinach. Spinach bought in loose bunches should be washed before refrigerating. Trim off roots and thick stems, then rinse the spinach several times to remove any dirt clinging to the tightly curled leaves. Drain the leaves well, wrap in towelling and store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. For maximum freshness, use the spinach within four days.

Ontario spinach is as delicious uncooked in a salad as cooked as a side vegetable or in a main dish. For a traditional and tasty spinach salad, team the spinach with fresh mushrooms, hard cooked eggs, onions, bean sprouts, crumbled bacon, and a sweet and sour dressing. One 10-ounce cellobag makes enough spinach salad to serve four to six people.

Cooked spinach is easy to prepare. For the right amount of water, rinse the washed spinach quickly under running water. Water droplets left clinging to the leaves provide sufficient water for cooking. Cook in covered saucepan over moderate heat

for four to eight minutes, then top with butter and serve as a side vegetable.

Remember spinach also makes a tasty addition to stir-fried dishes, lasagna, quiche, crêpes, and soups.

Different vacuum cleaners perform different jobs

A vacuum cleaner represents a major purchase from the household budget, so it is wise to consider your own particular needs carefully, as most vacuum type cleaners can be expected to last at least ten years.

Unfortunately, the perfect vacuum cleaner for every home has yet to be invented. There are three basic types, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.

The canister type, which cleans by suction only, does well at bare floors and above-the-floor cleaning.

An upright machine uses brush and beater action along with suction and does the best job of cleaning carpets. Neither will effectively do the job of the other.

A compromise or all-purpose cleaner is the combination 2-in-1 power nozzle type which combines the best and the worst of both types. As you clean carpets with the power nozzle or power head, the canister section of this machine follows along behind. If your rooms are small, or furniture arrangement tends to be crowded, this may prove to be awkward, bumping into furniture as you move along.

A wise choice depends on deciding which types of cleaning you do most - bare floors and above-the-floor work, or carpets and rugs.

To summarize, for a home with a large carpet area, an upright is the best choice, with its beater action. If

most of your rooms have bare floors or small mats and you like to clean upholstery and dust with your vacuum cleaner, the canister type with its specialized tools would be best. However, if you cannot easily distinguish your needs, or have equal amounts of bare floors and carpeting, you might need a power nozzle combination type.

An alternative, if you have the storage space, is to buy two machines, an upright and a canister type, which can be an economical choice as well. Both of these machines can be purchased for approximately the same price as a combination model.

