

**THIS ISSUE**

- **Bamboo preparation for meals**
- **Mizuna descriptor**

**PREPARATION OF BAMBOO SHOOTS**

Steven Keilar

While the Australian bamboo industry has seen significant development over the past 2 to 3 years, there is still limited information available on the preparation of shoots for consumption. Bamboo connoisseurs will attest that fresh bamboo shoots are superior in both taste and texture to canned and preserved shoots. Despite this there is a possibility that potential customers will not purchase fresh bamboo shoots because of a perception that they have a bitter flavour. However, like lima beans and Brussels sprouts, bamboo shoots are a naturally bitter product and also require cooking to maximise their palatability.

In countries where bamboo shoots are commonly consumed, shoots can be found in a variety of dishes from salads and stir-fries through to soups. One of the attractions of bamboo shoots is that cooking does not destroy the crisp texture of shoots and as such they can provide an interesting contrast to other ingredients. In addition to their unique texture, fresh shoots are excellent carriers of flavours. They take on the flavour of whatever sauce and ingredients they are cooked with but impart their own subtle straw-like flavour. This makes them flavoursome additions to curries and stir-fries.

There are a number of methods for shoot preparation. In Thailand and Vietnam some shoots are finely grated and used in salads to give a bitter flavour. In Japan, shoots are sometimes boiled whole for in excess of two hours. However, the most common preparation involves boiling shoots in stocks, soups or salted water before use in assorted dishes. The following guide to shoot preparation and the recipe were supplied by the Australian Commercial Bamboo Corporation (ACBC), and form part of their promotional material for fresh "Cockatoo Bamboo" shoots.

**Shoot preparation**

1. Cut fresh bamboo shoot in half lengthwise.



2. Peel away outer leaves & trim any fibrous tissue at the base.



3. Slice bamboo shoot thinly into strips or bite sized pieces.



4. Boil shoots in lightly salted water for 8 - 10 minutes. Drain, rinse thoroughly & taste. If any residual bitterness remains, boil again.

Cooked shoots will store for up to two weeks in a sealed container in the fridge.

**Recipe****Garlic, ginger & white wine bamboo shoots**

- 250g of pre-boiled Cockatoo Bamboo Shoots, cut into bite-sized slices
- 200g of chopped green eschallots / spring onions
- 2 teaspoons of fresh minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon of fresh ginger
- tablespoon of white wine
- 2 tablespoons of chopped coriander leaves
- tablespoon of sesame oil

Heat sesame oil in a wok and add bamboo, eschallots, garlic and ginger. Simmer on moderate heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the white wine and coriander; bring to simmer and serve. Vary the quantity of ingredients to taste.

For more information contact Steven Keilar, NRSU University of Queensland (ph: 07 5460 1604) or The Australian Commercial Bamboo Corporation (ACBC) PO Box 970, Mullumbimby 2482.

# Mizuna

## *Brassica rapa* var. *nipposinica*



### Other names

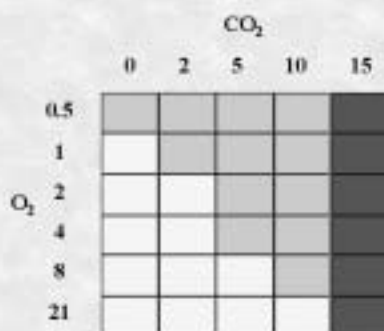
**English:** mizuna greens, mizuna mustard, pot herb mustard

**Chinese:** shui cai

**Japanese:** mizuna, kyona, kyomizuna

### Use

Leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Smaller, lighter-coloured leaves are milder in flavour, tender, and best used in salads. Darker leaves have a stronger mustard flavour and should be stir-fried. Older leaves can become fibrous.



### Quality characteristics

- leaves should be green & free of holes & cuts
- leaves can be of any size, although larger leaves have stronger flavour and texture
- overall appearance of leaf stalks & leaves should be fresh with no wilting caused by moisture loss

### Postharvest handling

- Low temperature storage slows colour loss & water loss. Cool to at least 5°C before packaging. Packaging reduces water loss & adds value through improved presentation.
- Wash in sanitised water before packing to minimise rots. Allow to air-dry before packing in plastic bags.
- Modified Atmosphere Packaging reduces respiration rate & slows colour loss. Optimum combinations of oxygen and carbon dioxide are shown above (medium shading = beneficial, low shading = no effect, dark shading = toxic).

Compiled by Tim O'Hara and Lung Wibng (DPI Gatten)



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Editors: Graeme Thomson and Wendy Morgan  
☎ 03 9210 9222 Fax: 03 9800 3521  
Agriculture Victoria, Knoxfield  
Private Bag 15  
Ferntree Gully Delivery Centre VIC 3156  
Email: [graeme.thomson@nre.vic.gov.au](mailto:graeme.thomson@nre.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [www.nre.vic.gov.au/trade/asiaveg](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au/trade/asiaveg)  
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