



MICHIGAN SOYBEAN
PROMOTION COMMITTEE

a new release



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National Soyfoods Month -- a great time for edamame

Edamame's "the word" during this year's National Soyfoods Month in Michigan. This spring, youth in central and southeastern Michigan will be encouraged to garden and grow edamame (ay-duh-MAH-may) thanks to a partnership between the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee (MSPC), the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens at Michigan State University (MSU) and the National Soybean Research Laboratory (NSRL).

Edamame are sweet green soybeans that are fun to eat and grow. "Getting kids involved with growing their own food stirs their interest in tasting the food," says Gretchen Hofing, Lenawee County-based dietitian and soyfoods health educator with MSU Extension. "As a soyfood, edamame provides a complete protein and is low in saturated fat and cholesterol free. Getting kids into the habit of eating and even growing their own healthful foods supports positive growth and development throughout life," adds Hofing.

Once the pods are harvested and cooked, kids enjoy popping them right out of the pod into their mouths. "Anyone who has worked with kids and edamame will tell you that the two are a great match," states Theresa Herman, research specialist with the NSRL at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "I'm thrilled MSPC is doing this project and am happy that our seed supply can meet the needs of their outreach network," says Herman who was the contact at NSRL and facilitated the donation of more than 40 pounds of edamame seed.

The seeds will be distributed mainly through the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens with an additional outlet at the Ann Arbor Hands-on Museum. "We make it a goal to send the kids home with at least one plant when they come to visit the gardens, and the edamame seeds will make a very nice addition. Each child will take home enough seeds to plant four feet of edamame," says Norm Lownds, associate professor at MSU and curator of the Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens, which gets 500 to 600 visitors a week during the spring. In addition to the school groups and families that visit the gardens, Dr. Lownds will distribute seeds through his Collaborating Classrooms and Seeds of Science programs.

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The Michigan 4-H Children's Gardens will be growing edamame seeds throughout the summer. Check out the webcam that will give you a view of the plants at <http://edamame.ath.cx>. For more information on edamame or to get your own seed samples visit <http://www.nsrl.illinois.edu/general/edamame.html>.

Purchasing and consuming soyfoods is a great way to support your health and Michigan agriculture. The Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee represents the soybean producers in the state and funds soybean research and educational efforts. For more information on the MSPC, visit www.michigansoybean.org. For information on MSU Extension's nutrition programs, visit www.msue.msu.edu/fcs and click on "Nutrition."

Here's how easy it is to cook and enjoy edamame. Look for more soyfoods recipes at www.soyconnection.com.

FRESH OR FROZEN EDAMAME

Fresh or frozen edamame in the pod
Water for boiling
Salt (optional)

If harvesting your own edamame, pick the pods when the seeds look big in the pods and while the pods are bright green in color. Beans from the yellow pods will not taste good (but you can keep growing them to harvest seed). Store the picked pods in the refrigerator and cook as soon as possible.

To cook edamame (fresh or frozen), fill a pot full enough with water to cover all of the pods you want to cook. Bring the water to a boil, and then add the edamame pods. Cook for 5-10 minutes to desired tenderness. Drain, cool under running water (optional) and sprinkle with salt, if desired.

Edamame make a great snack food or side dish. Hold the pod near your lips and pop the beans in. Or pop all the beans out into a bowl to use in a salad, pasta, stir fry or soup – use your imagination! You may also find green soybeans already out of the pod in the frozen section at the grocery store. These can be cooked up and served just like lima beans or peas.

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