



Transitory Delights: Garlic Scapes

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It's always a great happiness when garlic scapes are ready for harvest each year. Garlic scapes are one of the most delightful but transitory delicacies of the garden and are available for only one brief moment in late spring to early summer. The scapes are the firm, round flowering stalks of hard-neck varieties of garlic. As the scapes grow longer, they curl all the way around and then head straight up, finally growing to be as much as two feet in length.

Cut them before they start to straighten out. Of course, you can just leave them on the plant but the garlic heads in the ground will be smaller, perhaps as much as one third smaller. One year, I left some of them on to see if this was true: it was. If you've never done this, I would leave some scapes on just to see what happens.

To harvest them, simply cut them off where they connect to the main stem and store them in the fridge. They will hold for quite a while in the crisper.

Garlic scapes have a mild and subtle garlic taste and can be added to almost anything but dessert. Chop them and add them to salads, salad dressing, stir-fry, soups, or whatever you can think of. Make pesto with them. Be fearless.

If you find these in the market, they will probably be expensive, because they are only available for a very brief time. They are somewhat like our lives: They are very precious.

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