



Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*

# Spicing up your veggies to help save the planet

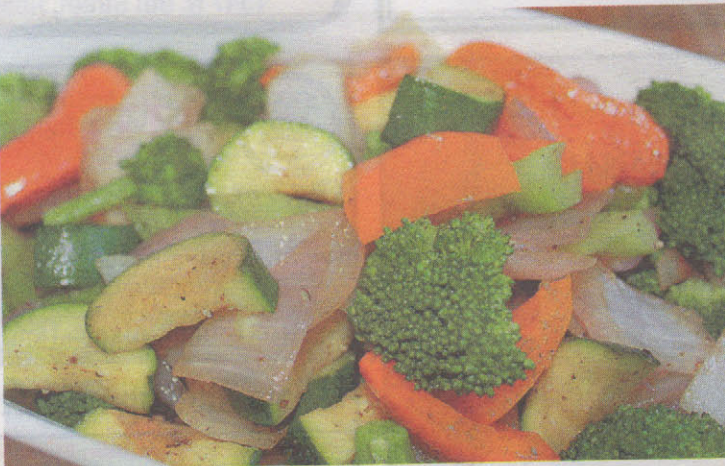
**I**N AN election year, whatever your political views may be on how to generate electricity, fracking, greenhouse gas emissions or organic farming, we all need to do our part to preserve our environment.

The emphasis on preserving the vital soil of organic farmlands likely always will take priority for those of us concerned more about the health of our children.

Sustainability is a big topic, and we know that natural food is better for many reasons when we compare organics with GMOs. But how else can we do our part? These bigger environmental challenges require collaborative solutions, but there are a few things we can do on our own to make a difference.

**Bring your own:** A reusable water bottle, that is! According to the Environmental Protection Agency, only around 9 percent of plastic waste is recycled. There are many options made with BPA-free glass or stainless steel. Opt for a reusable bottle instead of a plastic bottle. BPA, or bisphenol A, is an industrial chemical used to make certain plastics and resins since the 1960s.

**Walk:** Exercise is important, but with the longer days and mild evenings, simply taking



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: KATE MURRAY

a walk in the neighborhood where you live can bring benefits far beyond your waistline. Find a friend or take your child or pet on a long walk every day.

**Bike:** Ride your bike to work or spend an afternoon out on the bike trail with family. I find that I see more people riding their bikes while on vacation at the shore. Why don't we ride more at home? It's fun, great exercise and nonpolluting.

**Reuse:** Instead of packing your lunch in a disposable bag, pick up a cool reusable lunch bag or a stainless steel bento box. Your food will stay fresh and fashionable.

**Swap:** When the seasons change, our wardrobes do, too. Instead of always buying new clothes, organize a clothing swap with your friends and shop in each other's closets.

**Upcycle:** Landfills already are overflowing with unwanted items. Think outside the box about how you can reuse instead of throwing out.

**Repurpose:** Instead of getting rid of old furniture, try refinishing it or painting it in a fun color. This gives you a fun project and brings trash to treasure.

**Cook at home:** Making just one additional meal at home

each month instead of eating takeout can help reduce the more than 100 million plastic disposable utensils that are thrown away in the U.S. each year.

**Grow your own:** Summer is a great time of year to try your hand at gardening. Plant a few seedlings and see what happens with a little love. Your wallet will thank you, and so will the earth.

Let's capitalize on the cook-at-home and grow-your-own suggestions above. My suggestion this month is a quick and easy dish that you can use to spice up those homegrown vegetables. I call these Montreal vegetables because the combination of seasonings together is more widely known as Montreal steak spice seasoning. Minus the steak, the Montreal seasonings make for a delicious addition to just about any vegetables in your summer garden.

### Montreal Spice Blend

- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black peppercorns
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seed
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seed
- 1/2 teaspoon caraway seed
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander

### VEGETABLES (you can use any vegetables you like)

- Green and orange bell pepper
- Red onion
- Zucchini
- Broccoli

Using a mortar and pestle (or coffee bean grinder) and grind seeds together until combined. Sprinkle over vegetables and grill or roast. ☺

*Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at: [asilentcure.org](http://asilentcure.org).*

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