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The joys of garlic and soy

BY GLENN EVANS

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Editor's note: Although some cultures and medical professionals accept garlic and soybeans as having the medicinal properties mentioned in this story, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not.

The National Soybean Research Laboratory reports an acre of soybeans produces 82,368 crayons.

Children have been known to take a nibble of their atomic tangerine, but that's not the way to get your recommended daily allowance of soybean — especially during National Soybean Month.

The healthful soybean shared its month with good old garlic, which borrowed the spotlight for National Garlic Day on April 19.

"I regularly recommend that my clients consume garlic in order to help them recover from illness or to maintain good health," said Danielle Heard, a certified holistic health counselor and natural whole foods chef in Longview. "I have seen remarkable results when I prepare healing foods containing garlic for people who are ill."

Garlic's antibacterial and antiviral properties help ward off colds and protect against parasites, Heard said.

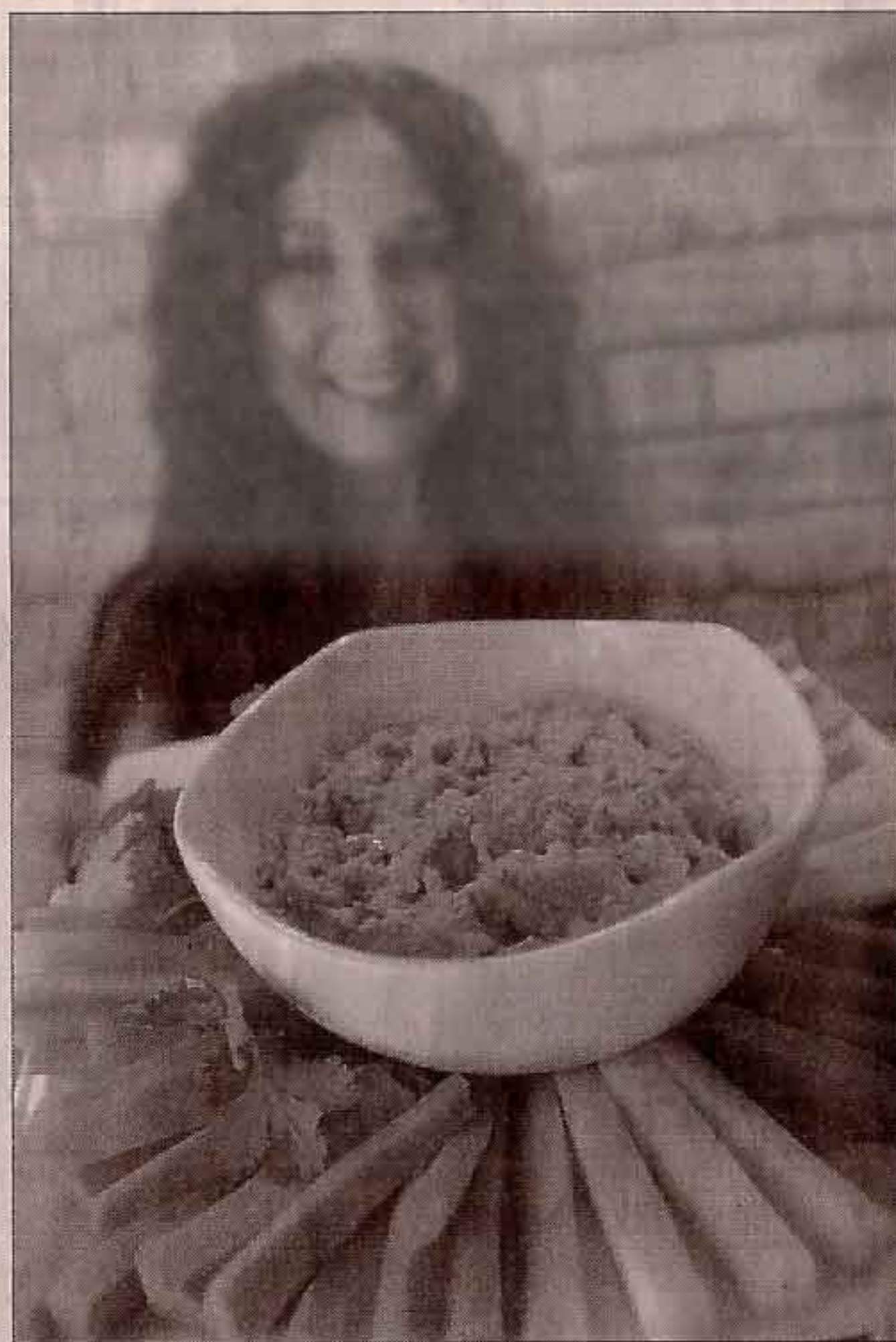
"It is also extremely helpful in maintaining a healthy respiratory and digestive system and aids in the prevention of cancer," she said.

The American Cancer Society's website says garlic is being researched as a preventative, "however, there is not enough evidence at this time to support eating large amounts of garlic or taking garlic supplements for cancer prevention," it says.

The Food and Drug Administration does not support the claim that garlic wards off colds or aids in digestion.

Garlic also does not appear to be manufactured into crayons or anything else kids tend to put in their mouths.

That errant, childhood nibbling illustrates what experts on soybean nutrition said for this story: most soybeans are genetically modified and do not carry the banner for soybean nutrition.



Danielle Heard holds a bowl of guacamole dip that she made with garlic at her home in Longview.

Kevin Green
News-Journal
Photo

That banner is hoisted by the bean's isoflavones, which are plant estrogens and responsible for healthy lipid metabolism and cardiovascular health. Isoflavones are removed by genetic engineering, according to Stephen Lewis, owner of Doctor's Nutrition in Longview.

"It's almost impossible to get non-genetically modified soy," Lewis said. "Soy food products and soy isoflavone supplements should come from non-genetically modified sources and can add significantly to a healthy diet."

Soybean products on grocery shelves include tofu, a fermented custard-like substance that acts as the binding agent in stir fried dishes. Other fermented soybean products include miso, a brownish paste that becomes a slightly salty soup, and tempeh, which has more texture and serves as a meat substitute.

Heard steers her clients away from most soy products on the shelf.

"If a person would like to take

advantage of the benefits of soy, I recommend that they stick to the traditional soy products like miso and tempeh which are the healthier whole food choices that are not highly processed," Heard said. "Traditional soy products are fermented, making them much easier to digest. And they also contain health supportive microorganisms ... which aid in digestion."

Soy's hormonal benefits, courtesy of its isoflavones, include easing hot flashes during menopause and boosting breast cell function, Lewis said.

"Tofu is the Japanese word for soybean curd," Lewis said. "The fermentation process makes it very healthy and easily digested and easily absorbed. This is a source of B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium and sodium. According to Chinese medicine, tofu has a cooling nature and benefits the lungs and large intestine."

The product also relieves stomach inflammation and neutralizes toxins in the gastrointestinal tract,

he said.

Lewis likes garlic, too. The pungent vegetable contains allicin, an oily sulphur compound credited for accomplishing what Lewis' grandmother called, "spring cleaning."

"The allicin is the ingredient that causes garlic to be a worm killer," Lewis said. "It has also been shown to be more effective against candida (yeast) than eight leading antifungus. Maybe my grandmother was right."

For people who just can't get enthusiastic about garlic or soy, April also happens to be blueberry pie month.

Guacamole dip

3 avocados (medium size and ripe)
1 teaspoons garlic finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh Cilantro finely chopped
1 tablespoon green onion finely chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil
Vegetable crudité (carrots, celery, red bell pepper, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower — for dipping)

Cut the three avocados in half and remove the seeds. Scoop the avocado from the outer peeling with a spoon and place into a mixing bowl. Using a potato masher, mash the avocados until they are smooth.

Add the remaining ingredients to the avocado in the bowl and stir together well. Taste the guacamole and add more seasonings if needed.

Serve with vegetable crudité (carrots, celery, cucumber and red bell pepper cut into sticks and broccoli, and cauliflower florets) or corn tortilla chips. Guacamole is also great served on baked potatoes, salads, tacos, in lettuce wraps and stuffed inside tomatoes.

(Store guacamole inside an air tight container with lid inside the refrigerator. Completely cover the top of the guacamole with a sheet of plastic wrap to prevent the air from turning the avocado black.)

Makes: 2 cups. Source: Danielle Heard, www.artemisinthechity.com.

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