



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## **HEALTHY AND HAPPY THANKSGIVING ARE ARIZONA LEAFY GREENS ON YOUR TABLE?**

(Phoenix) Arizona is the Winter Salad Bowl and provides 90 percent of leafy greens in North America between November and February. Yet many people forget to include red, green and butter leaf lettuce, kale, spinach and cabbage at their Thanksgiving feast.

Turkey, mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes often dominate a holiday table. Protein and carbohydrates are important elements for a balanced meal, but nothing can replace the nutrition supplied in a fresh salad. Dark leafy green vegetables are full of vitamins A, C, E and K. They also supply a significant amount of folate, which can help prevent birth defects.

How you wash your leafy greens is very important for your health. It's important to prevent cross contamination with other foods to reduce the chance of a food borne illness. Lettuce and other leafy greens are grown with strict food safety protocols, but contamination can happen in someone's kitchen.

To protect fresh vegetables and fruits, use separate cutting boards and clean up cloths from any meat or poultry. Be sure to wash utensils carefully with hot water and soap to keep bacteria away from any raw food served.

One important way to keep the kitchen free of germs is not washing the turkey. Splatter during washing can spread bacteria up to three feet away. There is no reason to wash any meat; cooking will kill any germs that may be present. Don't defrost it on your counter either. Let it thaw in the refrigerator or in cold water that is changed every 30 minutes.

Undercooked turkey can also make people sick. Make sure the temperature in the bird reaches 165 degrees in three places – the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast.

During this Thanksgiving season, Arizona has much to be thankful for. Governor Ducey declared this November as Leafy Greens Month. Everyone can celebrate the state's rich bounty with a beautiful, fresh, nutritious salad on your table and on your plate.

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