

Vegetable provides more than nutrition

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Despite the drought and some gardeners saying that produce just didn't set on this summer, others found tremendous success in veggie production. I saw a picture of a heapin' pile of cucumbers recently, the final pick before the plant was ripped out of the ground as the overabundance from daily growth was becoming a nuisance.

Well I wonder if my friends knew ALL the uses suggested for cucumbers. You mean there's more to do with cucumbers than eat them? More than putting them in salads or making pickles? More than slicing them into a pitcher of water with lime juice for a refreshing drink?

By golly, I read that rubbing a cucumber slice on a mirror will keep it from fogging. Or rub it on faucets, sinks and stainless steel for a "green" way to clean and shine. No streaks and no harm to the fingers or fingernails. And it provides a pleasant fragrance.

I've seen pictures of women in a spa environment with cucumber slices over their eyes. Another facial suggestion is to cut up a cucumber into boiling water and let the nutrients in the steam reduce stress with the soothing, relaxing aroma.

Here's a great one that could definitely make cucumbers a huge marketable item if they really succeeded at this miracle—removing cellulite and wrinkles.

Alrighty then. Who has been keeping this secret? And to think, I just threw out a cucumber that was hiding in the bottom of the veggie bin in the fridge. Maybe the mush would have even worked.

Read on. You have a job interview and you realize that you don't have enough time to polish your shoes? Rub a freshly cut cucumber over the shoe and watch the chemicals provide a nice shine that also repels water.

You realize you don't have gum or a mint for that interview or for a special moment? Well take a slice of cucumber, press it to the roof of your mouth for 30 seconds to eliminate odor. Yes, the phytochemicals will kill the bacteria that causes bad breath.

Now I'm laughing. Hmm. I don't happen to have gum or mints, but I'll be . . . there's a cucumber in my purse. Good thing I grabbed an extra one on my way out the door. Oh. There isn't a cucumber in my purse? Wait. Maybe there's still a slice clinging to my thigh since I did a quick cellulite-removal in case I go to the pool later.

What? Rubbing a cucumber slice on a squeaky hinge will solve the annoying problem? Who needs WD40? Bring on the cukes!

Although it's too late for this year's garden, I also read that placing cucumber slices on a pie tin in the garden allows natural chemicals to react with the aluminum, providing a scent that humans don't notice but it drives garden pests away. Something to remember for the next picnic.

Wow. All that in addition to the nutritional advantages of Vitamin B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, Folic Acid,

Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc. Holy cow! Or should I say Holy Cucumber! Forget the caffeine. Eat a cucumber for a natural quick pick-me-up that can last for hours.

Would you like cream in your coffee? No. In fact, skip the coffee. Will you please bring me a cucumber?

You may have detected a bit of sarcasm in my analysis of these suggestions. But seriously, I'm a firm believer in the advantages of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Some of today's diseases didn't exist when our ancestors ate off the land and didn't have access to preserved foods. Garbage wasn't filling up the precious land because food didn't come in cans and packages. Every morsel of the food was used for something, if not for humans, for the animals or for household chores.

Although medications have miraculously saved lives, the natural remedies can sometimes do the trick at much less expense and with safer long-term results. Do you have a cough? Try lemon and honey.

And keep in mind . . . an apple a day keeps the doctor away.