

Carrot Top Pesto

Carrot leaves are very nutritious with lots of protein, minerals and high levels of vitamins, especially 'C' and 'K'. Even better, they're tasty too so rather than throwing them on the compost heap try using them in this recipe. The result is rich vivid green pesto sprinkled with white flecks of punchy garlic balanced by a sweet smoothness from the almonds and olive oil.

Ingredients (This will make about 750 ml but can be scaled to suit what you have available)

5 litres (a carrier bag full) of carrot tops

1 bulb of garlic, split into cloves, peeled and loosely chopped

75g of whole almonds (it doesn't matter whether they're blanched or not) hazel nuts would work well too

75g parmesan, finely grated

300ml extra virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

Method

Wash the leaves to get rid of any grit or mud. Put them in a big saucepan of boiling water for 2 – 3 minutes until the leaves are just wilted. Strain in a colander and refresh with cold water to stop them cooking more. Drain completely and squeeze out as much liquid as you can.

Dry roast the nuts in a heavy based pan until they are nicely browned.

Put the nuts, garlic and a small amount of the carrot leaves into a blender (the carrot leaves help the other ingredients process well) and blitz until the nuts and garlic are finely chopped.

Add the remaining carrot leaves and process until they are pureed, you will probably need to scrape down the sides of the blender a few times to ensure even processing. Add the parmesan and blitz until well mixed.

Add the olive oil gradually and process until you get a fluid paste stopping now and again to test the consistency and scraping down the sides. When it gets to the 'falling over' point when the pesto gently falls into the processor blades as it turns it's ready, season to taste and that's it.

The pesto will keep for a few days in the fridge or can be frozen.