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Garlic Scapes with Red Bell Peppers and Shiitake Mushrooms

We grow several varieties of garlic. When the plants send up their flower stalk, you need to cut them off in order to allow the plant energy to be directed toward the growing garlic bulb. For years I just threw those stalks in the compost pile. Then last year, I found out that they are a delicious vegetable and considered to be a delicacy in some cultures. They don't get tossed in the compost pile any more!

4 cups garlic scapes, flower heads removed and discarded, cut into 1 inch pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large red bell pepper, cut into thin 1 inch strips
8 ounces shitake mushrooms, sliced
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Bring 3 quarts of water to a boil in a large saucepan, add the scapes, cover and boil for 2 minutes.

Remove the scapes from the water and plunge them into an ice bath for 2 minutes. Drain and pat dry.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat one tablespoon of the oil over medium high heat.

Add the mushrooms and sauté them until they are just beginning to brown.

Add the second tablespoon of oil to the pan and add the scapes, bell pepper strips, salt and pepper.

Stir fry for 5 minutes or until the scapes and peppers are heated through.

Place on a serving platter and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

Serves 4-6.

Victoria Wessler.