

## **Edame: the other soybean**

By KYLEE BAUMLE

You'd think that someone who lives in the middle of farm country where soybeans are a major crop, would have given some thought to growing edible soybeans in the garden some time ago.

I've lived in Paulding County my whole life and have grown sweet corn nearly every one of the 37 years I've been married, but this edible soybean thing was new to me. It just never occurred to me to grow edamame.

I'd heard about edamame several years ago, but it was just this past February when I tasted it for the first time. "Picky Eater" describes me pretty well and it's just been in the last several years that I've tried eating some things that I was pretty sure I wasn't going to like. But, you just never know. Take kohlrabi, for instance.

A coworker brought some beautiful kohlrabi into work one day last year and I complimented her on its size and beauty. She'd grown some of the most fabulous kohlrabi I'd ever seen.

But eat it? Me? No, thank you. You can have my share. But, she was having none of that. So, I took a slice, stuck it in some ranch dip, and then took a bite. I just knew it was going to taste bad.

Oh. My. Goodness. I liked it. I felt a bit like Mikey from the Life cereal commercials. The texture was deliciously crunchy in all the right ways and though it didn't have a strong taste, I liked it all the same. This was early in the season, so I went right out and bought seeds so that I could grow my own in the fall garden.

My experience with edamame wasn't quite the same. It wasn't that I thought I'd hate it, really. I'd just not ever been in the same place it was. So, I gladly tried it when it was offered to me. From that day on, I've made it a point to always have some in my freezer so that when I get a craving, I can quickly cook it up and eat it. Bonus: it's a healthy snack, too!

Edamame is easily grown here in Paulding County, because it enjoys the same growing conditions that regular soybeans do. It will benefit from amending our clay soil with organic material, as is the case with most everything we grow, so I'd recommend adding compost or aged manure prior to planting.

Edamame is a legume, and like other legumes such as peas, beans, peanuts, and clover, it manufactures its own nitrogen needed for growing. These plants will also enrich the soil with nitrogen, released when the plant dies. How cool is that? A plant that not only feeds you, it feeds the soil, too.

There are several varieties of edamame, but the one that grows well and has the best flavor in most parts of the U.S. is 'Sayamusume'. This is the one I grew this year and will be growing next year as well.

And for those of you who haven't had it before, just what does edamame taste like? To me, it most closely resembles the flavor of lima beans, only better and firmer. Some say it has a nutty flavor, but my taste buds don't get that.

Though edamame is served both in and out of the pod, you don't eat the fuzzy pods. The beans are easily popped out of the pods with your teeth and sea salt is a great condiment for seasoning. When sprinkled on the pods, it seasons the beans much like salting the rim of your margarita glass.

If you serve them already shelled, there's no limit as to how you can season them. I like them buttered.

So, last year it was kohlrabi, this year it was edamame. I wonder what new thing I will discover I like and want to grow next summer?

Read more at Kylee's blog, Our Little Acre, at [www.ourlittleacre.com](http://www.ourlittleacre.com) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre](http://www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre). Contact her at [PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com](mailto:PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com).