

# Kale Chips Rock!

## Eating and Growing Healthy Every Day

Jeff Kline, Chair, Delaware Urban Farm Coalition

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We're cooking up a buzz about kale chips!



*Kale*

Hold on – what are kale chips anyway? Kale is a leafy, green vegetable that's related to cauliflower, broccoli, and head cabbage. It can be grown locally, and it is rich in vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants. So kale chips are really kale leaves, chopped and briefly baked with a bit of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt. MMMM! These easy-to-make chips taste amazingly like deep-fried potato chips!

So why the buzz about kale chips? Because they are so MUCH better for us than potato chips! What an intriguing alternative when over-indulgence is oh-so-easy. The Delaware Urban Farm Coalition advocates for healthy and tasty options every day, and we're working hard to creating a buzz for kale chips that'll be serious competition for the latest junk food fad.

So why doesn't everyone just buy some kale and cook it? The Delaware Urban Farm Coalition is wrestling with this dilemma: kale and other fresh produce that is relatively easy to grow, store, and prepare is not readily available to many residents in and near Wilmington.

What are we doing to solve this dilemma?



*Kale Chips*

Since its formation in 2008, The Delaware Urban Farm Coalition, which is facilitated by the [Delaware Center for Horticulture](http://www.thedch.org), has sought to expand the growing of fruits and vegetables in and near Wilmington; improve access to a variety of healthy foods for those who currently don't have wide access; and, provide information regarding healthy eating. For more information, visit <http://www.thedch.org/what-we-do/community-gardens-urban-agriculture>.

We developed Delaware's first urban farm at 12th and Brandywine Streets in Wilmington as our flagship effort. Comprising 1,600 square feet of three-season raised beds, the Urban Farm is situated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Neighborhood where the nearest grocery store is two miles away. Crops grown at the

Farm, and sold to residents through our weekly farmer's market include kale (yes!), collards, tomatoes, chard, onions, and blackberries, among many others. The Farm also includes another 1,200 square feet of raised beds for community members to grow their own vegetables, fruits, and flowers.

But there's still so much more to be done! That's why the Delaware Urban Farm Coalition organized the Wilmington area's first annual "Growing Local, Staying Local, Eating Local" urban agriculture summit in October, 2011. Almost 100 persons attended the summit; they represented farmers, children's health advocates, and community gardeners, among many others. Summarizing their discussions through the kale chips lens puts it all into perspective: "How do we create buzz about kale, kale chips, and other healthy vegetables and fruit?" Their ideas and suggestions fell into these three main categories:

1. Grow more kale. Establish more school and community gardens in our neighborhoods that allow adults and children alike to learn how easy it is to grow kale, and to see how kale looks, feels, and tastes.
2. Make more kale available. Transport even more kale from nearby urban and rural farms into our neighborhood corner stores; fresh kale can be stored for a week or so at cool temperatures.
3. Eat more kale. Educate city residents about the nutritional value of kale, and spread the word about how to make those tasty and nutritious kale chips.

Members of the Delaware Urban Farm Coalition are deeply committed to implementing the summit attendees' recommendations in practical, creative, and collaborative ways. We're on Facebook as the '[DelawareUrbanFarmCoalition](#).' You'll find a lot more information there about our work and the 2011 food summit. Please 'like' us to keep learning about the Coalition and the issues we're addressing.

If you'd like to help or have questions, feel free to contact me at: [jeff.kline@taylorcline.com](mailto:jeff.kline@taylorcline.com).

The [Delaware Center for Horticulture](#), which hosts the Delaware Urban Farm Coalition, cultivates a greener community; inspiring appreciation and improvement of our environment through horticulture, education and conservation. To learn more, contact Tara Tracy, Urban Agriculture Manager at: [ttracy@thedch.org](mailto:ttracy@thedch.org).

#### BAKED KALE CHIPS

These are healthy and low calorie, and you cannot stop at just eating one! Kale chips are a great party or movie night snack. Try different seasoning combinations, too.

- I bunch kale (4-5 cups)
- I TBS olive oil (olive oil spray works especially well!)
- I TSP sea salt or seasoned salt
- I TSP vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a non insulated cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. With a knife or kitchen shears, carefully remove the leaves from the thick stems and tear into bite size pieces. Wash and thoroughly dry kale pieces with a salad spinner. Drizzle chips with olive oil or spray with olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning. Feel free to experiment with various seasonings that you and your family like.
3. Bake until the edges brown but are not burnt, between 10 to 20 minutes. Gently stir leaves halfway through baking.

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*Jeff Kline is Chair of the Delaware Urban Farm Coalition and is passionate about creating and improving communities through expanded access to local, fresh, and healthy foods. He is also President and owner of Taylor Kline, Inc., an award winning specialty trade, general contractor, and construction management company located in New Castle, DE.*