

**Seasonal Eating**  
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**.Broccoli Salads Freshen Up Spring**  
**April 2021**

Trees. That's what broccoli was called when I was little and we were having it for dinner. Actually, it should have been called flowers as the crowns are made up of the tiny unopened flower buds of the plant. Whatever you call it to get children excited about eating it, broccoli is full of vitamin C and very nutritious. It is a cool season vegetable that appears in spring before it gets too hot and begins to bolt or in the fall when temperatures are cooling down.

Both the stems and the heads are edible. The stems are good when sliced fairly thinly as they can be somewhat dense or often they are shredded to make a good base for a coleslaw variation. Salads are actually a really good way to use broccoli. They make a hearty salad that is good to start off the fresh vegetable season as we transition from winter into summer.



Taking a hint from raw broccoli served with ranch dip, a salad of the broccoli florets with ranch dressing, Cheddar cheese and bacon or ham can zip up any meal and can be especially appealing to children. Then there is the standard southern favorite of broccoli, raisins, red onion and bacon in a mayonnaise, sugar and vinegar dressing. No picnic potluck would be complete without this favorite.

Broccoli is a vegetable that pairs really well with fruits, both fresh and dried. In the recipe below, grapes star with the broccoli in a crunchy, sweet and refreshing salad. Celery and almonds add the crunch while green onions bring in the savory and dried cherries the sweet. If you don't have dried cherries you can use dried cranberries or raisins instead. While you could use a bottled poppy seed dressing, the poppy seed vinaigrette is easy to whisk together and brings a balance of sweet and tart.

So as spring is in full swing, break out the refreshing broccoli and make a broccoli slaw or crunchy salad to go along with that roasted chicken or grilled pork chop.

Visit the Bedford County Extension website for more recipes and information about seasonal eating ([bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu)).

## **Broccoli and Grape Salad**

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard  
1 1/2 tablespoons poppy seeds  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
2 tablespoons mayonnaise  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 large crown of broccoli, chopped into small florets, about 2-3 cups  
2 ribs celery, sliced  
1 green onion, white and green parts, sliced  
2 cups halved red seedless grapes  
1 cup dried cherries or cranberries  
1/2 cup toasted, slivered almonds

In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar, sugar, mustard, poppy seeds, salt, pepper and mayonnaise. Add the olive oil in a steady stream while whisking. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, celery, green onion, grapes and cherries. Add the dressing mixture and stir to coat. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Stir in almonds just before serving.