Sheri’s Beginner Greens
Recipe courtesy of Sheri Castle

Makes 4 servings

1 1/2 to 2 pounds small, tender collard greens (or any other winter greens)
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and finely diced
1 apple, peeled, cored and coarsely grated
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 to 3/4 cup chicken stock, vegetable stock or apple cider, divided

1. Cut off the tough stems from the greens and throw them away. Chop the leaves into small pieces. Fill a large bowl or sink with cool water. Add the greens leaves and gently swish them with you hand to wash any sand or dirt. Lift the greens out of the water, pat them very dry, and set them aside.

2. Heat the butter and oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the butter foams, add the onion and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring frequently, until it softens and turns golden, about 10 minutes. Stir in the apple and cook, stirring often, until it is crisp-tender, about 3 minutes.

3. Add the greens one handful at a time and stir to coat with the butter and oil. Let each addition cook down a little before adding the next. Cook, tossing the greens constantly with tongs, just until they wilt, 1 to 3 minutes, depending on the size and type of the greens.

4. Pour 1/2 cup of the stock over the greens, cover the skillet, reduce the heat and simmer until the greens are tender, 1 to 5 minutes.

5. Add the salt, pepper and 1/2 cup of the broth. Cover the pan and simmer until tender, onto the greens, stir, cover, and simmer until tender. Add a splash of the remaining stock if the greens get dry. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.

What else works? You can use a chopped tomato instead of the apple.

This recipe works best with very small collards greens that will cook quickly. It also works with any type of quick-cooking green, such as spinach, chard, small tender leaves of kale, mustard, beet, turnip, or mixed braising greens. To test whether your greens are a good candidate for this recipe, try tearing a leaf; if it tears easily, it’s a good choice. If you would have to use a knife to cut or shred the leaves, the greens would do better in a recipe that gives them more time to cook.