

TAKE FIVE

Mint makes spread a refreshing course. **E10**

TASTE

READERS ASK

Good paprika a key ingredient in veal dish. **E12**

LOCAL FLAVOR

COURTESY CLEVELAND BOTANICAL GARDEN

From planting seeds to packing jars of their own salsa, teens from a group at the Cleveland Botanical Garden are making a sophisticated product. From left, they are Denzel Hapton, Davante Warren, Shaakya Smith, Jeremy Kendrick, American Culinary Concepts manager Tim Skaryd and Aniceta Dancy.



PHOTO COURTESY | THE PLAIN DEALER

Find "Ripe From Downtown" salsa at the Cleveland Botanical Garden's gift shop, North Union Farmers Market at Shaker Square, Sergio's Sarava and Sergio's at University Circle.

Student salsa makers get serious

Sure, you could look at it as a \$5 jar of salsa. But this year's "Ripe From Downtown" salsa is jam-packed with a whole lot of new skills acquired by the Green Corps, a teen growing group of the Cleveland Botanical Garden.

This is not the first year of the salsa-making program but the first big batch (6,000 jars) with a new recipe tweaked by area chef Sergio Abramof. Students not only grow some of the local ingredients and processed and marketed the results, they

also participated in a chef-styled boot camp put together by Abramof, chef and owner of Sergio's at University Circle and Sergio's Sarava at Shaker Square.

Abramof's Sarava chef, Willie Jackson, helped the students tweak their recipe. Jackson, Abramof and Sergio's at University Circle chef Ryan Albaugh taught the students to identify ingredients, to consider their flavors before and after production, and to maintain consistency in mass pro-

duction.

"I wanted a joint effort," said Abramof, who calls the outcome "a sophisticated product."

It's no wimp. The inclusion of a Brazilian hot pepper called a malagueta gives the salsa a sincere fire that more than earns its medium-hot categorization. It's great with chips or for zesting up guacamole by adding a tablespoon to one mashed avocado with a touch of lime juice and salt.

—Debbie Swook