



This Week's Word From the Farm

6/28/10

What's In Your Box ?

- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Zucchini – Our first pick, we only have a few this week but you can be certain there are plenty more to come.
- Radishes
- Wrinkled Cress – Add this spicy green to other salad greens for a wasabi-like kick.
- Japanese Salad Turnips – Back by popular demand. A favorite from last year. Delicious raw or cooked.
- Chard – We recommend you sauté your chard with some spring garlic in olive oil and finish with a splash of balsamic vinegar.
- Cilantro
- Red Kohlrabi
- Curly Endive
- Moroccan Mint – Use this mint fresh or dried for a refreshing tea (or a tasty Mojito !)
- Spring Garlic

Dear Friends,

There's an ethic that has evolved hand-in-hand with Community Supported Agriculture: in the common interest of helping to sustain local, community-based farming, the subscriber shares in the risks as well as in the bounty. As a "shareholder", somewhat like an investor in stock in a publicly-held company, gains are shared, but so are losses.

Personally, I've always had mixed feelings about that aspect of CSA farming. I tend to take it personally when things don't go well and consider it to reflect on my farming and organizational skills, less so on the weather, insects or other natural causes of boom and bust. Admittedly, in this line of work, that can be a recipe for a lot of headaches and upset stomachs. So, when a couple of years ago we lost most of our tomato and pepper transplants, I bought replacements from a certified organic nursery down in the Bay Area—at considerable expense given that I had already bought seed, transplant flats, soil mix and spent the time to plant all those flats only to turn around and pay someone else's cost for the same thing. My reasoning was that tomatoes and peppers are too important a crop among those we grow and too important in most people's diet to say, "Well, no tomatoes or peppers this year. That's farming!" This year, we lost our first cucumbers in the late freeze of May when temperatures got down to 27 degrees, and then our second planting was beset by cucumber beetles. This week, we're now on to our third attempt to plant a first stand of cucumbers. By comparison, last year, cucumbers were in our CSA boxes by the week of July 6th.

For those of you who are new to our CSA this season, this may seem like just the way farming is, but these kinds of setbacks have not been typical of our farm during the years since we first offered subscriptions. Our boxes have featured between ten and fifteen different items each week, with a new item introduced or brought back a second, third or fourth time over the course of the season. We would not normally consider putting fennel and kohlrabi in the same box the first week of our CSA, preferring instead to introduce subscribers to one unfamiliar thing a week. We've preferred providing lots of squash, cucumbers, salad mix, green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, onions—crops that folks know and most enjoy—along with a few more unusual items to make it all more interesting.

This year is a little different in many respects. Although we are fast approaching fully planted, most of our main crop vegetables got planted late on account of the late rain and wet soils, and have been growing slowly on account of the cool weather (until this past weekend!). Trying hard to catch up in the area of our main crops, we haven't been able to get our new salad mix area of raised beds, sprinklers and shade cloth set up, and our first planting of salad mix was overwhelmed with weeds to the point that it wasn't practical to keep it. We've since planted 1,800 heads of lettuce to make up for that, which you'll be enjoying in your boxes soon. To make up for our delayed start and instead of ending our season with tomatoes and peppers, we're extending our season into November and planning for transplants of cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, leafy greens, and other crops that will enjoy Fall weather. Remember, when fall weather brings a blush to your sweetheart's cheeks, that's when carrots are sweetest.

So, it's a bit like turning lemons into lemonade, isn't it? Before you know it, your boxes will be full of familiar things (think lovely, sweet melons!), and it'll seem like you're getting bonus boxes when they are full of potatoes, winter squash, cauliflower and broccoli. In the meanwhile, enjoy the challenge of eating out of the box while we labor to bring you more, and more...and more.

Recipes of the Week:

Point Sur Pasta ~ Compliments of CSA members Sandy and Steve Miller

- ½ pound penne pasta
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ head spring garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes
- 1 cauliflower head, broken into florets
- 14 oz. canned plum tomatoes
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup whipping cream
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

In large skillet, heat olive oil and add the chopped garlic. Cook over low heat about 3 minutes, being careful to not burn the garlic. Add cauliflower florets to pan. Cook for 5 minutes, then add tomatoes and their juice. Simmer for 10 minutes and then add the stock and red pepper flakes. Cook, partially covered, until the cauliflower is tender. Cook the penne according to package directions. Add the cream to the cauliflower mixture. Mash the cauliflower with a potato masher or pulse gently with an immersion blender. Sauce should still be slightly chunky. Drain pasta and stir in the sauce. Garnish with Parmesan cheese. Serves 4.

Couscous with Kohlrabi and Chermoula Dressing

- 1 or 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 4 tablespoons minced cilantro and/or parsley
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2-3 cups cooked couscous, cooled to warm
- 2 cups peeled and diced kohlrabi
- ½ cup diced radishes
- 16 kalamata or other black olives (optional)
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix garlic, cilantro/parsley, paprika, cumin and salt to taste. Stir in lemon juice and olive oil. Toss this mixture with couscous. Bring to room temperature. Gently toss with kohlrabi, radishes and olives. Serve as is, or sprinkle with feta cheese. Serves 6.

Asian Salad

- Salad turnips and/or peeled kohlrabi (approx. 3 cups total)
- 1/8 cup rice wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup sesame oil
- 1/8 cup chopped cilantro leaves

Thinly slice turnips and/or kohlrabi. Mix vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar in a bowl. Whisk in sesame oil. Toss with sliced turnips and cilantro. Serve chilled.

