



The Weekly Weeder

A weekly publication for CSA members

JULY 2, 2008—BOX #4

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Box Contents & Tips

Sugar Snap Peas— store peas in the coldest part of refrigerator in a plastic bag— prefers high humidity

Snow Peas— make a stir fry— see recipe on page 2

Swiss Chard— our favorite cooking green and excellent substitute for spinach. Store in a plastic bag

Basil— Thai (dark stem) or Genovese (green stem) Do not wash until ready to use.

Parsley— Curly or Flat Leaf— store with stems in a glass of water covered with a plastic bag

Lettuce— hail damaged use as soon as possible

Red Leaf— All Shares

Green Bibb— All Shares

Red Romaine— Full Shares only

Garlic Scapes— make pesto with the basil and use this instead of a clove of garlic

Kohlrabi— a friend equated this veggie to the core of the stem of broccoli

Coming Soon...

broccoli, beets, cabbage, baby leeks, scallions, more chard and herbs



Raspberries and asparagus in the foreground, broccoli, cabbage, and leeks in the background

News from the Farm

Friday we received a welcomed gentle 1/2" of rain that was much needed. Saturday we received another 1/2 " of rain and 3 rounds of hail, some as big as dimes. It's one thing or another on the farm. Too much of rain, too little. Where is the balance?

Things could have been much worse. At least our tomatoes and peppers didn't have fruit that would have been damaged and are healthy enough that they will likely grow out of any damage. The crops that did receive the most damage were the peas, lettuce and chard. They however are not a total loss, and are still very edible— just not as pretty as what we like to provide.

Despite the weather life on the farm keeps moving with some routine but just enough variation to keep it interesting. Monday is typically our major harvest day with the crew (Brett and Craig) starting at 7:00 am. (Cate and Mat start at 4:30am— gotta love the baby monitor) Tuesday we finish harvest and pack your boxes, if there is time we finish the day by weeding a bed or two. Wednesdays the crew has off, while Mat does the Madison deliveries, and Cate and Paul do the LaCrosse and Viroqua deliveries. Thursday and Fridays have been maintenance days— getting things transplanted and weeded. Once the summer crops kick in they too will be harvest days as we hope to get to market again. Which will mean another trip to Madison.

Enough with the mundane small talk I have something more important to discuss with you. I want to tell you a little about a very important person here at Ridgeland Harvest— my wife Cate. You see I feel the need to tell you about how amazing she is because as a good Minnesotan she would never say much about herself.

Cate is the one who has most of the knowledge of how to raise vegetable on a large scale. She worked three years for Tipi Produce while we lived in Madison in the late 90's. When we moved to the Driftless Region she then worked for three years at Harmony Valley, where after she left they had to hire two people to replace her. She gained some valuable knowledge from two of Wisconsin's best growers— always knowing that someday she would have a farm of her own.

Cate coordinates the harvest and runs the crew. She also handles all of the seed ordering, and determines the planting schedule (including every thing in the greenhouse). She is the one that knows when we need to plant that broccoli that will be ready to harvest for boxes 5 and 6. Trust me this is no small task when since we grow 45 different crops with multiple successions. And to think we just added micro greens to our planting schedule.... As the harvest coordinator she also deals with our wholesale accounts— sending product availabilities, taking orders, and all the associated bookkeeping.

Continued on page 2...

Quick Kohlrabi Pickles From [Restaurant Widow](#)

2-4 small kohlrabi bulbs, trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1/2" cubes

Good olive oil (optional)

Rice vinegar (not sweetened, available in Asian grocery stores and some well-stocked supermarkets. If you don't have rice vinegar, you could substitute something rather mellow - white wine or sherry vinegar, or even white vinegar with just a pinch of sugar added)

Kosher Salt

Fresh Black Pepper

Place the kohlrabi chunks in the bowl of a lidded, airtight container. Drizzle with a touch of olive oil, a good splash of vinegar, and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Replace the lid and shake well. Taste and adjust seasoning. Place in fridge, shaking occasionally. They are best after they have marinated for a few hours, and will last about a week, becoming more intensely flavored but still largely retaining their lovely texture.

5 delicious and easy ways to use your peas:

1. IN THE RAW with a dip of 1 cup plain yogurt, 1/3 cup crumbled feta, and 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black peppercorns.
2. IN SUCCOTASH, sautéed with freshly cut corn kernels (scrape the milk from the cob to make it creamy), scallions, and cherry tomatoes.
3. BLANCHED AND TOSSED with buttered egg noodles, parsley, and garlic scapes.
4. ROASTED with olive oil and sea salt beneath the broiler until crisp-tender and lightly browned on the edges; drizzle with a few drops of toasted sesame oil before serving.
5. TOSSED WARM WITH FRESH PESTO and toasted pine nuts.

Mat's Stir Fried Snow Peas

8 - 10 ounces snow peas

1 tablespoon peanut oil

1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic

2 tablespoons Tamari, mixed with 1 tablespoon brown sugar, 1 tablespoon water, and 1 tablespoon chili paste

Preparation:

Rinse the snow peas and trim the ends.

Heat the oil in a preheated wok or skillet on medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the peas Stir-fry until they turn bright green. Add the garlic and cook briefly until it is aromatic. Then add the tamari mixture and Stir-fry for another minute and serve. (Total stir-frying time for snow peas is about 2 minutes.)

News continued:

Okay here is the kicker on top of all that she also works a 20 hour a week job. Cate is a Certification Specialist with Midwest Organic Services Association. In a very small nutshell- she reviews organic plans of farms and processors and determines whether or not they are adhering to the National Organic Standards.

Despite all Cate does to make us successful, her focus is always Paul (our 19 month wiggly, busy body, into everything son). What amazes me is not everything she does- most people with some ambition can work long days and take care of a child- but the fact that she has such positive outlook on everything and is almost always in high spirits. She is somehow able to see the good in people and in difficult situations. I have been waiting for her to crack, but we have been together for 13 years now and she is as rock solid as the day we met- not one sign of even a hair line fracture.

Have a Good Week

Mat



The crew mulching the raspberries.