



The Weekly Weeder

A weekly publication for CSA members

JULY 7, 2010—BOX #05

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Box Contents and Tips

Beets, Chioggia: Remove and wash tops, store in plastic bag separate from roots. Store the roots unwashed in plastic bag. Use the beets sooner than later as they're looking a bit rough. The wet weather is affecting things quickly now that it's getting hot and muggy.

Broccoli: Delicious! Eat raw or cook. Store in plastic bag. Use within 3 days for best results.

Cabbage, Napa: We hadn't intended on giving shares another giving of Napa, but since carrots and zucchini weren't in the box, we needed something more. See "Crop Talk" for more. Store in plastic bag in refrigerator. Wash thoroughly.

Cucumber: Stores best in plastic bag in crisper. Grown in the high tunnel.

Fennel: Feathery fronds adorn the white bulb. All parts of the plant are edible, though the bulb is primarily used. A light anise flavor, which mellows during cooking. Use raw in salads (cut thinly or minced) or cook. Indigenous to the shores of the Mediterranean, so traditionally used in Italian cuisine. This planting was grown in our high tunnel. Store in plastic bag in the refrigerator, using fronds first as they wilt quickly. Bulb keeps for several weeks in plastic bag.

Fresh Garlic: A slightly stronger garlic flavor than the scapes when eaten raw. Cook quickly to retain the mild garlic flavor. Store in refrigerator in plastic bag to keep fresh. Peel back all outer layers of leaves down to the juicy clove.

Garlic Scapes: (Full Shares only) Last week! Another sign that the garlic is drying down, when scapes or the flower stalk are done.

Basil: Just the beginning of this crop, with beautiful tops! Shares receive one variety: either Purple Opal (purple leaves), Genovese (glossy green), or Thai (green leaves with purplish stem). Use immediately for optimal freshness. Stores best above 50-degrees, so keep in bag on refrigerator door.

SAGE (half shares) Sage is especially excellent with fatty cuts of meat, and can be included with roasts, pan fried, barbecued, or used as a rub along with a mixture of other spices. Store in a plastic bag in refrigerator for a week to use fresh.

Marjoram (full shares) sweeter and milder than oregano—hang in dark dry place to dry, or place in a small vase and use as a bouquet. Store in a plastic bag in refrigerator for a week to use fresh.

Red Chard: The first harvest from our field planted crop. Use for a cooking green.

News from the Farm

Family Life: We often hear the phrase "family farm" but what does this mean for our farm exactly? First, Mat and I own and manage all aspects of our farm, carrying out duties, participating, and overseeing the work being done. We're involved in harvesting and washing produce, preparing ground and planting, and so are our children. We have two young kids—Paul is 3 years old, and John is 1 year old. Our work and family life blend, are entwined, combined, threaded together. It's a wonderful way to raise our children! We are the primary people to teach our children about the world, through real life situations that occur on the farm and of course off the farm. They're directly witness to and involved with the daily bustling of the farm, with crew members who become an extension of our family, and the many activities that happen at one time, with the changing activities of the season. At their young age, it's all pretty exciting!

That isn't to say it's not challenging to be running a business while caring for two very busy, into everything boys! There are certainly some jobs too dangerous, loud or difficult for children to be involved with; times when talking on the phone is a real challenge (screaming child!) or having a serious business conversation, but also times when they just need to simply be playing with their toys. Yet there are many things that even young children are capable of doing. Our theory is as long as they're interested, we'll keep them involved, and to always encourage their participation in farming, but never force it as an occupation. We want to show them what it really is— a way of life. They already help on the tractor, sometimes with CSA box packing, moving our cattle to fresh pasture, and even washing some produce. As a family, we take 'crop walks' to observe the fields, make decisions about box contents, check for pests, dig up and pull vegetables to check on harvest time-frames, and generally explore. It's always an adventure!

Mainly, our children are absorbing the world around them and learning to be busy like their parents, through meaningful work and play. "What should I be doing?" asks Paul when he wants to help like everyone else around him. Even little John can drag hoses and help water the transplants.

In our down time, they join me in tending to our home herb and flower gardens, mowing the lawn, playing in their favorite digging spot and of course cooking. And like many families, we work all season to stock our freezer and pantry with berries, jams, sauces, vegetables and meat—all activities that they like to help with— especially if they can really get their hands dirty.

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Crop Talk:

We had hoped to give carrots again this week, but we received 2.5 inches of rain on Sunday and Monday. We fought the swarms of mosquitoes in the field and high tunnel—a first here on our ridge farm (we typically have knats but not mosquitoes!) So it was too wet to get the carrot digger in the field. We had to substitute another crop, napa cabbage, to fill out the boxes this week (we hadn't planned on giving more napa this season). We hope the rains will diminish (those 70% chance for more on Wednesday!) and we will dig them for box number six.

In other crop news, we were able to get a whole bunch of planting done last week! The crew transplanted our 3rd broccoli, the fall cauliflower, green kale, Lacinato kale, collards, fennel, baby leeks. And on Saturday the family managed to get the second planting of tomatoes transplanted. We still have things growing in the greenhouse that will be transplanted in the field and in the high tunnel— Bok Choi, parsley, basil, and lettuce. People always ask, "Have you finished planting yet?" And are then often amazed to hear that planting doesn't really stop until late October when the garlic is planted.

We had to make some difficult decisions on our longer day direct seeded crops. We took a close look and determine our priorities. We considered many factors but mostly does it fit our crop rotation, will there be enough time for the crop to mature, and is that soil ready to be planted. We decided that there would not be enough time to plant our jack-o-lanterns or rutabagas, both take 90-100 days to mature. We hope our pie pumpkins do well, so our fall Pumpkin event can still have little pumpkins at least!

Regarding some of our short day crops, we planted more salad mix, cilantro, dill, green beans and yellow wax beans (with more to be planted in 7-10 days), more beets along with an heirloom golden beet, and sweet corn. Since we didn't plant jack-o-lanterns we decided to plant double the amount of carrots, and we'll plant more at the end of next week (substituting one orange crop for another?!)

Coming Soon...

Zucchini/summer squash, more carrots, purple pod beans, cherry tomatoes, more basil and fresh herbs, and fresh garlic.

ZUCCHINI ALERT: We sure thought the zucchini would be starting to fill this week's box, but fruits didn't size up for early week harvest. But watch out, here's your official zucchini harvest warning!!

Bulletin Board

Garlic Harvest Party: The garlic is starting to dry down, but we can only estimate when we'll be harvesting at this point. Our best guess for the event is that it will be either July 31 or August 7 and hope to announce a date in next weeks Weekly Weeder

Raspberry Picking: The raspberries are loaded with blooms! The variety we'll be picking from this season is a mid-summer fruit, so picking won't begin until the end of July. We'll keep you notified of picking dates. But don't fret, even if you can't get to the farm to pick, you'll receive berries from your box.

Reminders:

1. Bring your own bag, box or cooler to your pick-up site. We need all the wax boxes returned. Thanks!
2. Send us your favorite recipe to include in future newsletters. We love to hear how you're using the food!

Need more recipes for seasonal cooking ideas?

The Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC) From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh Produce is now for sale through the farm. Place your order and we'll pack your copy in your weekly CSA box. Mail your check to the farm for \$17.00

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NEWS FROM THE FARM ... CONTINUED

Overall we strive to maintain balance, when how you earn your living— your work surrounds you and the endless list can become very consuming. We still are working very long hours but try to keep regular meal times and built in family time. Like many of you, this can be a challenge, though we're always happier when balance is found.

May you find balance in your own lives this week,

Cate



Recipes! Recipes! Recipes!

Fennel Cucumber Salsa

From: AllRecipes.com
Prep Time: 20 Minutes
Ready In: 40 Minutes
Servings: 16

"This is a fresh and unusual salsa. Use it as an appetizer or on grilled meats. The fennel has a surprisingly light flavor. Perfect for summer."

Ingredients:

1 English cucumber, diced
1 large fennel bulb, diced
1 avocado - peeled, pitted, and diced
1/2 red onion, chopped
1/2 cup pickled banana peppers, diced
1 bunch cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Combine the cucumber, fennel, avocado, red onion, banana peppers, cilantro, honey, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a bowl.
2. Allow mixture to sit 20 minutes before serving.

Caramelized Broccoli with Garlic

Sourced from Food and Wine website

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 heads of broccoli (1 1/4 pounds total), stems peeled and heads halved lengthwise
1/2 cup water
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
Pinch of crushed red pepper
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Directions

1. In a large, deep skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Add the broccoli, cut side down, cover and cook over moderate heat until richly browned on the bottom, about 8 minutes. Add the water, cover and cook until the broccoli is just tender and the water has evaporated, about 7 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil along with the garlic and the crushed red pepper and cook uncovered until the garlic is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Season the broccoli with salt and black pepper, drizzle with the lemon juice and serve.

Roasted Beets and Fennel Salad

From: Food and Wine

Ingredients:

4 beets, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges
2 thyme sprigs
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 large fennel bulb with fronds—bulb cut into 1/2-inch wedges, 1 tablespoon chopped fronds
1 teaspoon sherry vinegar

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. In a medium baking dish, toss the beets with the thyme, the water and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and cook for about 40 minutes, or until tender. Let cool slightly. Discard the thyme.

2. In a small baking dish, drizzle the fennel wedges with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until tender and lightly browned.

3. Pour the beet juices into a bowl and whisk in the vinegar. Add the beets, fennel wedges and fronds and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Basil Vinaigrette

Serve over grilled or broiled fish, or as a sauce for steamed vegetables.

2 Tablespoons minced basil into a 1/4 cup olive oil, as needed
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon snipped fresh chives
dashes of salt, to taste
freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Combine ingredients in a small container with a lid and shake very well. Taste for seasonings; adjust as necessary. Makes 1/3 cup.

Oven Fried Beet Chips

From the kitchen of Cate and Mat

4 large beets peeled
2 T Olive oil
1 tbsp kosher salt, or to taste
Black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Slice beets very thin, toss with a tablespoon of olive oil
Spread evenly on a lightly oiled cookie sheet, and season with salt and pepper.
Roast 15 minutes, then flip the chips.
Continue to roast 10-15 minutes, until chips are crispy.

While we take great care to provide the cleanest and safest food possible, all produce should be washed prior to eating.