



TWO SMALL FARMS

Community Supported Agriculture

August 6, 7, 8 2008

Bull's Eye, by Andy Griffin

This week your harvest share includes a bunch of pink skinned beets. If you slice these beets in half you'll see a distinctive target-like pattern of alternating pink and white rings marking the flesh. This curious coloration has prompted some retailers to call these beets "candy stripe" beets but the correct name is Chioggia beet. Chioggia, pronounced "key-oh-jah" is a city of Northern Italy near Venice. The surrounding region is known as the Veneto and it's famed for its vegetable production. Besides the beet, Chioggia has lent its name a number of other vegetables. The round, red radicchio that has become a standard ingredient in the mesclun salads is Chioggia radicchio. There's also a warty blue hard squash called the Marina di Chioggia. We grow Chioggia beets because they taste good, not for the novelty of their internal appearance. Many people think Chioggia beets are even sweeter than the typical red blooded American beet.

Travelers tell me that the climate in the Veneto is similar to the Monterey Bay area. Someday I'd like to visit Chioggia and see for myself. I was standing behind my Chioggia beets one day at the farmers market when an older gentleman who was passing by announced that when he was in Chioggia he hadn't seen any beets. It turns out he'd entered Chioggia in a Sherman tank in the closing days of the Second World War. He was part of the American Fifth Army that flogged the Nazis all the way up the boot from Monte Casino and over the Alps. As important as liberation day was in Chioggia it probably wasn't the best moment for a tourist to appreciate the agricultural riches of the Veneto. After years of war economy and bombs the natives of Chioggia had been reduced to eating Chioggia rats.

Chioggia beets remind me of an Italian-American fellow named Louie Bonhommie that I knew when I worked on a farm in Bolinas during the 1980's. Louie delivered used wooden crates to the farm every Sunday morning and I used to help him unload his truck. Since his route took him to all sorts of small farms in Marin and Sonoma counties he was better than a newspaper for the latest gossip. One day Louie took a break from the scandals of the day and told me about his experiences in the army during the Second World War. Louie never saw combat. Instead, because he could speak fluent Italian, Louie served as a guard over Italian prisoners of war. The prisoners were shipped around California by bus or train

from farm to farm, and they harvested fruits and vegetables or pruned fruit trees while Louie stood around with a gun. A lot of Louie's wartime service was right around the Santa Rosa area where he'd grown up.

I asked Louie if it was dangerous standing guard over trainloads of Italian prisoners of war and he laughed. These men had been captured by the Americans in North Africa on the outskirts of Tunis. Most of them had originally come from tiny farms in Italy that were poverty stricken even before the war. After being drafted into the fascist military they were stationed out in the middle of the Sahara in the Italian colony of Libya. With the outbreak of hostilities, war was added to their ration of miseries. When they weren't being shot at by

the Allies or being ordered around by the Germans they had armies of flies to contend with, and thirst and hunger and scorpions and disease. After years of stress and privation being captured was a blessing. As the Italian Prisoners of War picked plums in California they looked around from atop their ladders at the orchards, the vineyards, and the ordered rows of vegetables in the Santa Rosa Valley and they murmured and conspired amongst themselves.... Their devious plot? Certainly they didn't have sabotage in mind. No. They were concerned that the war might end and they'd be shipped back home to Italy. One by one the prisoners came to Louie and asked him how they might get introduced to some nice Italian-American farm girls so they could make love, not war. Louie did what he could, and some of those men ended up as

successful farmers around Santa Rosa with big families and lush fields, and they became good friends and loyal customers for Louie and his wooden boxes. I still love this story. It reminds me that, while they made a mistake with Fascism, from art and women's shoes and wine and race cars all the way to bunched beets, when it comes to cultural values the Italians are right on target.

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This Week
Chioggia Beets MF
Armenian Cucumbers MF
Lettuce or Celery & Dill HG
Carrots (Parisian Round or Yellow) MF
Scallions HG
Lacinato Kale MF
Red Cabbage HG
Mystery HG
Mystery MF
Flowers: Mixed Bouquet HG

Notes and Recipes

What Jeremy F. would do with this week's box: Lots of salads with the lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, scallions, and cucumber. Cranberry bean stew with the carrots. We really liked the kale bread pudding recipe from a few newsletters back so I might make that again. If we don't eat the strawberries that evening (which we normally do) I'll make a coulis, or sauce, to go over ice cream or white cake.

Coulis de Fraises

1 basket fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced	½ cup sugar
1 TBS fresh lemon juice	2 TBS dark rum
½ tsp. candied ginger, minced	

In a blender, puree the berries, sugar, and lemon juice until smooth. Stir in the rum and ginger. Refrigerate for an hour before using.

Dried Strawberry/Walnut Bars

submitted by Lisa K
Last week I blended half the strawberries with about 10 dates and just enough apple juice to make the blender work. Then I added ½ pound of chopped walnuts and pressed the pulse button to stir everything. I spread the mixture onto a dehydrator sheet and dehydrated at 135 degrees for 24 hours. This makes about 10 bars. What was stuck in the blender tasted like pudding.

Pickled Armenian Cucumbers

submitted by Jen J.
These are microwave pickles and are super easy. I got the recipe from a lady at a farmer's market years ago.

Wash jars and rings in the dishwasher or in very hot water to disinfect. Boil the lids for a few minutes, same reason. (You could probably use any old jar and tight-sealing lid if you were just making a jar or two and could put them in the fridge, you wouldn't have to use canning jars.)

Cut cukes into 1" chunks. Put a sprig of fresh pickling dill on the bottom of the jar, fill with cucumber chunks, and put another sprig of dill on top. Add one peeled clove of garlic. Mix together ½ cup white vinegar, 1TBS salt, 1 tsp sugar, and pour into jar. Fill jar to ½" with cold water. Microwave jar (without lids) until the liquid just starts to boil. Remove from microwave. Dry rim of jar and seal of lid with a clean paper towel, and put the lid on. Jar should seal when pickles cool down. Let sit for a week or two before you eat them.

I make these pickles every year and they're really good. I've always made them with pickling cukes before so I'm not 100% sure the texture will be right with the Armenian cukes, but they sure are gorgeous!

Beet and Kale Salad

by Cynthia Lair, *Feeding the Whole Family*, from the website of The Bastyr Center for Natural Health.
In natural medicine, beets are considered a liver support food, important for renewing the liver's vital functions of keeping the body free of toxins. This vivacious salad boosts the body's immune system as well by offering a high dose of antioxidant power via carrots and kale. Intensely colorful, flavorful, and so healthful, it can be your "Vitality Salad!"

Workshops and Events

Canning Workshops: Learn how to preserve food from our friends at Happy Girl Kitchen Co. Hands-on workshops teach home-canning techniques so you can preserve and eat local foods year round. Check their website: happygirlkitchen.com.

Sunday, August 17th: Dinner in the Field, benefiting Open Space Alliance and Slow Food Monterey, at High Ground Organics in Watsonville. Featuring Guest Chef Jozseph Schultz of India Joze. \$125/per person. For reservations contact OSA: (831)423-0700 or osa@santacruzosa.org.

4 large beets	¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds
1 bunch kale	3 scallions
1 medium carrot	

Dressing:

3 TBS extra virgin olive oil	2 TBS balsamic vinegar
¾ tsp. dijon mustard	¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper
1 TBS chopped fresh basil	1 tsp. finely diced garlic

Wash beets and bring to a boil in a large pot. After boiling bring to a simmer, continue to simmer for one hour, until tender. Let cool, then peel beets and cut into ¾-inch pieces. In the meantime, lightly toast the pumpkin seeds by placing them in a dry skillet and cooking over medium heat. Constantly stir the seeds to ensure even cooking. When they begin to pop and give off a nutty aroma, they are ready. Set aside to cool.

Wash kale and place in a large pot of boiling water for 30 seconds. Place in strainer and cool with cold water, cut into bite size pieces. Finely dice the green onions and peel the carrot. Slice into 1/8-inch rounds. Place all dressing ingredients in a bowl and mix well with a wire whisk. In a separate bowl place chopped beets, chopped kale, diced green onions, sliced carrots and pumpkin seeds. Add dressing and toss gently. Serve chilled. Makes approximately six servings.

Teriyaki Beets

from *Fresh from the Farm and Garden* by Friends of the UCSC Farm and Garden

12 small beets (or one bunch full sized beets, quartered)	4 TBS butter or canola oil
2 TBS honey	1 TBS minced fresh ginger
1 TBS soy sauce	Minced garlic, optional

Boil or steam beets until almost tender (10–15 minutes). Rinse in cold water and cut in half. Combine rest of ingredients in small pan. Heat gently, stirring, until sauce is smooth. Brush sauce on beets and heat under broiler 5–10 minutes, basting frequently.

Honeyed Beet Quinoa Summer Salad

with variations, from *Fresh from the Farm and Garden* by the Friends of the UCSC Farm and Garden

Julia's note: I use ½ the amount of cheese and nuts they recommend. Any mixture of the below herbs work well.

6 beets, roasted	¼ cup honey
1½ cups orange juice	juice of 1 lemon
½ cup fruity olive oil	1 cup toasted walnuts or almonds, roughly chopped
1 cup crumbled feta cheese or shredded parmesan, optional	3 cups cooked quinoa, or another grain (brown rice, couscous, etc.)
½ cup chopped basil or cilantro	½ cup chopped parsley
6 minced green onions	lettuce greens

Dice roasted beets and marinate in orange and lemon juice and honey at least one hour. (Julia's note: I warm up my honey a bit before mixing it in the juices/oil... but don't make it too hot or it will 'cook' the juice and fruity oil!) Combine with other ingredients except salad greens. Chill at least one hour to allow flavors to blend. Serve on bed of salad greens.

Everything in your box and the flowers are organically grown. From Mariquita Farm: carrots, beets, kale, Armenian cucumbers, mystery. From High Ground: lettuce, celery, dill, scallions, cabbage, strawberries, flowers.