



TWO SMALL FARMS

Community Supported Agriculture

July 7-9, 2010

Crop Planning, by Andy Griffin

This is the week I get serious about crop planning for my late fall/early winter crops; here's the logic:

We're just past the longest day of the year so every day will get a little bit shorter. The soil is as warm as it's going to be. If we start to get all the basic ground preparation chores done in the next two weeks for our first fall harvest, we'll still have time to react if unforeseen problems occur, like tractors breaking down, seeders breaking, pumps failing, etc. I'm not being "pessimistic" to imagine that things might break, only realistic. After all, the schedule for our first summer plantings was set back by—yes—tractors breaking down, seeders breaking, and pumps failing. Today the bearings went out on the disk, for example. It happens!

I'll order seed tomorrow, Tuesday, when all the seed company employees are back from their 4th of July holidays. That way, even if there is some hang up in delivery, I'll still get plenty of seed in time to get my first fall plantings into the ground. For me, the last two weeks of July through the first two weeks of September are the most important planting dated of the year. We want to take advantage of the still long days and the warm soil and get crops like beets, chards, carrots, kales and watermelon radishes into the ground so that they can grow fast and frame up nicely before the shorter days and cooler nights slow growth to a crawl. If a farmer can get the fields full of produce that's almost 100% sized up by the end of October the crops will sit in the field and hold until they're harvested. The traditional "fall" crops, like pumpkins and hard squash all ought to be in the ground and well established NOW if they're to be ready for picking in the fall.

To get a head start on cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli plantings I'll take seed into Headstart Nurseries this week and next. Headstart has an organic program that we've used for years for our seedlings. By having Headstart grow my seedlings for me that I won't have to transplant into the field until September I can buy myself time to finish the harvesting of standing crops and do ground preparation on the ground that the cauliflowers, broccolis, and cabbages will eventually occupy.

This is also a time for us to care for the summer crops soon to come. We're weeding the second wave of young tomato plants and the peppers, watering the first sweet corn crop that's just around the corner, fertilizing the basil crop so that it bounces back for another cutting, and trying to kill the gophers

Renew Now!

The second 9-week cycle ends July 16th. If you are paying quarterly, we need to receive your check no later than July 17th to secure your spot, as some sites are full or nearly so. (9 weeks veggies=\$198; 9 weeks veggies & flowers=\$270) Make your check out to Two Small Farms, and send to P.O. Box 2065, Watsonville, CA 95077.

This Week

Basil MF

Lettuce HG

Tomatoes MF

Fennel HG

Strawberries HG

Chantenay Carrots MF

Bianco de Maggio Onions MF

Mystery HG

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet TF

in the squash planting at my house. The seed crops of Swiss chard, cilantro, agretti, and orach are maturing but are not yet ready to harvest. This year we're trying seed crops of Lacinato kale, Florentine fennel, and leeks too. Next week I'll try to put together a photo essay of these crops in full flower. The leeks, especially, look fun, like a field of pom-poms waving in the breeze. Most of this seed will probably arrive too late for this year's fall planting, but just in time to start planning for next spring/summer.

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Recipes and Notes

(see www.mariquita.com/recipes)

Roast Fennel and Onions, from Jeanne

This is my favorite thing to do with fennel. I can't remember where I got the recipe from.

Trim fennel bulbs and cut into wedges; i.e. cut in half through the core, then cut the halves in half, and cut those halves in half. Cut onions in similar sized wedges. Coat the bottom of a roasting pan with olive oil, and toss the fennel and onion wedges with some more olive oil. Lay out the fennel and onions in the pan, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add a little water to about 1/8 inch. Cover the pan (or use aluminum foil) and roast at 425 for about 1/2 hour. Remove the cover or foil and cook another 15 minutes or so. The fennel and onion will caramelize and make a delicious combination.

Cooking Class/Lunch at Millennium in SF

Sunday, August 29th from 10am to 2pm

Join Eric Tucker, executive chef at the renowned Millennium in San Francisco for a cooking class and three course (vegan) lunch. Cost:\$75/per CSA member; space limited to no more than 12 people. Net proceeds will be donated to CHEFS, a non-profit Eric works with training youth how to be cooks etc. Email Shelley or just send a check made out to Two Small Farms.

Tomato, Onion, and Potato Gratin, from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters

1 medium yellow onion	2½ lbs. potatoes
1½ pounds tomatoes	2 cloves garlic
S & P	1 TBL chopped thyme leaves
3 TBL extra-virgin olive oil	2 TBL white wine
1½ cups chicken stock	

You will need a 9-inch square or oval gratin dish with 2-inch sides. Peel the onion, cut it in half lengthwise, and slice it as thin as possible. Peel and slice the potatoes 1/8 inch thick, and hold in cold water until ready to use. Cut out the stem end of the tomatoes and slice them 1/8 inch thick. Peel the garlic and slice thin.

Pre-heat the oven to 375 F. Lightly oil the gratin dish and distribute the onion slices evenly over the bottom. Season with salt and pepper. Drain the potatoes and arrange half of them over the onions, overlapping like shingles. Season with salt and pepper and half of the thyme. Make a layer of the tomatoe slices on top of the potatoe slices, slat and pepper them, and sprinkle with the rest of the thyme and the garlic slices. Finish with a final layber of overlapping potatoes and more salt and pepper. Drizzle with the olive oil and the white wine, and add enough chicken stock to come two thirds of the way up the sides of the gratin. (You may need to add more liquid later, but you must allow for the juice the tomatoes will give off.)

Cover with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover and press down on the mixture, flattening it to ensure that the top layer of potatoes is moistened. The liquid will emulsify somewhat as it continues to cook. Bake uncovered for another 40 minutes, or until a knife pierces through easily and the top is golden brown. Serve either warm or at room temperature.

Coriander Carrots, from *Great Vegetarian Cooking Under Pressure*, by Lorna Sass

1½ lb carrots, cut on the diagonal into ½-inch slices	½ cup coarsely chopped onions
¾ to 1 cup water (use the minimum required by your pressure cooker)	¼ cup dried currants or raisins
1 TBL ground coriander seeds	1 bay leaf
½ tsp. salt, or to taste	1 TBL safflower or canola oil
1-2 TBL freshly squeezed lemon juice (optional)	1 TBL minced fresh parsley

Heat the oil in the pressure cooker. Cook the onions over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, for 1 minute. Add the water (stand back to avoid sputtering oil), currants, coriander, bay leaf, salt, and carrots. Lock the lid in place. Over high heat, bring to high pressure. Lower the heat just enough to maintain high pressure and cook for 2 minutes. Reduce the pressure with a quick-release method. Remove the lid, tilting it away from you to allow any excess steam to escape. If the carrots are not quite tender, replace (but do not lock) the lid and let them continue to cook for another minute or two in the residual heat. Just before serving, stir in the lemon juice (if using) and parsley.

From Mariquita Farm: onions, basil, tomatoes, carrots. From High Ground: strawberries, lettuce, fennel, mystery. From Thomas Farm: flowers.

Double Tomato Bruschetta, from *AllRecipes.com*, by Laurie Thompson

6 roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped	½ cup sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil
3 cloves minced garlic	¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar	¼ cup fresh basil, stems removed
¼ tsp. salt	¼ tsp. ground black pepper
1 French baguette	2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat the oven on broiler setting. In a large bowl, combine the roma tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, basil, salt, and pepper. Allow the mixture to sit for 10 minutes. Cut the baguette into 3/4-inch slices. On a baking sheet, arrange the baguette slices in a single layer. Broil for 1 to 2 minutes, until slightly brown. Divide the tomato mixture evenly over the baguette slices. Top the slices with mozzarella cheese. Broil for 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Marinated Tomato Salad with Fennel and Blue Cheese, adapted from a *Cook's Country Magazine*

1.5 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored and sliced into ½ inch wedges	½ fennel bulb, cored and sliced thin
½ teaspoon salt	2 TBL extra virgin olive oil
1 TBL white wine vinegar	1 garlic clove, minced
¼ cup chopped fresh tarragon	½ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup crumbled blue cheese	

Toss tomatoes, fennel and salt in large bowl, then transfer to baking sheet lined with paper towels; let drain 15 minutes. Return drained tomatoes and fennel to large bowl and toss with oil, vinegar, garlic, tarragon, and pepper. Let marinate 15 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over salad. Serve.

Red Indian Carrot Soup, from *Super Natural Cooking* by Heidi Swanson

2 ½ lb carrots	3 TBL clarified butter or extra-virgin olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced	2 yellow onions, chopped
6 cups vegetable stock or water	2 TBL unfiltered raw honey (optional)
Fine-grain sea salt	3 TBL olive sludge or premium extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Scrub the carrots and cut into 1-inch segments; aim for the segments to be roughly the same size so they'll all be tender at the same time. Heat the butter in a large, heavy soup pot over medium heat, then add the garlic and onions and saute for 5 minutes, or until the onions start to get soft and translucent. Add the stock and carrots, bring to a gentle boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, until the carrots are just tender throughout; don't overcook. Remove from the heat and stir in the honey.

Cool for 5 or 10 minutes, then puree with a handheld immersion blender. Season the soup with a generous amount of salt and serve drizzled with the olive sludge or olive oil. Serves 6.