



# TWO SMALL FARMS

## Community Supported Agriculture

June 16-18, 2010

### Mariquita Farm Production Update, by Andy Griffin

The smallest tomatoes ripen first, and over the next several weeks we will have more and more cherry toms for the harvest box as the plants kick into action. Sungold Cherry toms and Sweet 100s ripen faster than red and yellow pear cherries so baskets of mixed fruit come later. The bigger tomatoes take a little longer to ripen and we'll start with the first saladette-sized, tangy, Green Zebra tomatoes as well as an experimental plum tomato. Early Girls won't be early this year, but they're coming. The heirloom tomatoes will beat them into production with the earliest one probably being Purple Cherokee in late June,

followed by the Brandywines and the other varieties. Big Beef beefsteak toms and San Marzano canning tomatoes will come when they usually do, by early August. Our sweet corn crop is knee high. We have made four consecutive plantings in the hopes of harvesting sweet corn over a longer harvest window. Our sweet peppers have been set back by the unseasonable cool weather but they're finally picking up speed. Padron peppers come first because we pick them when they're young and tender green. Cucumbers have been slow too this year, but expect to start seeing them in a couple of weeks. Eggplant arrive by late August. And even as the harvest finally starts to feel like summer we're already planning for fall. The hard squash are all in, as is a pumpkin patch of novelty jack 'o lanterns and a "winter squash zoo" of heirloom hard squash. My idea is that some of the old heirloom squash are too large to put in a harvest box and are also too big for some people to store or eat but if I plant a couple of rows of a whole bunch of different kinds then the people who appreciate these ancient beauties might want to come out to the farm for a U-pick. Sweet potatoes are in the ground too.

The last of our fava bean cover crops from last winter have been turned under, and now we're working on turning under all the trash left over from our over-wintered vegetable crops and planting those fields into summer cover crops. Mostly we're planting Sudan grass, which, given enough water and sunlight, can produce an astronomical amount of bio-mass to replenish the soil, but at a sandy field out by Chowchilla, where we grew last year's sweet potato crop, we're going to try a crop of peanuts. If the peanuts turn out, we'll have our first ever peanut crop, and if they fail we'll call it an "experimental cover crop" and turn it under. Peanuts are legumes, just like fava beans, and they can capture atmospheric nitrogen and convert it into a "fixed" form of nitrogen that subsequent crops can take up as fertilizer. We're already buying seed for crops like leeks which will need to be in

the ground by August in order to be in your harvest box next early spring. In our Hollister fields our seed crops of Swiss chard and Erbette chard are waving their seed stalks high. We'll harvest our seed crops by late summer for next season's plantings of greens. At my home in Watsonville, where distance from any cultivated fields gives me the isolation I need to get pure seed crops of squash, I've got a crop of an interesting, ugly/beautiful, warty French heirloom hard squash I'm growing out for seed so that I can have a crop for next year's box. Oh, and I almost forgot! Purplette cocktail onions are just around the corner. Maybe you're not super crazy about onions, but I love them, and my wife, Julia, really appreciates them. She'd rather I give her a bunch of onions than a corsage of orchids, so just to remind her that I'm thinking

about her through all the chaos of the farming life I like to have some kind of onion to harvest during every season of the year. Thanks for your support.

### This Week

**Chives** MF

**Fennel** HG

**Spinach** HG

**Strawberries** HG

**Cherry Tomatoes** OR

**Green Beans** MF

**Chantenay Carrots** MF

**Erbette Chard** MF

**Salad Mix OR Little Gem**

**Lettuce** HG

**Basil OR Mystery** MF

**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet** TF

### High Ground Organics

**Production Update, by Steve Pedersen**

Because the late spring rains disrupted our planting schedule, we are just now getting our first cauliflower and by next week it should start to appear in your boxes. This year we are doing more of the purple and orange varieties in addition to the white. Savoy, red, and green cabbage will follow soon as well as broccoli and Romanesco. Our potato crop looks great and soon we will be digging new carola, red-gold, bintji, and desiree varieties. Because they don't store well, we will wait to dig the bulk of them until the plants have dried up and their skins have set. But when they are dug at the "new" stage they have a creamy, earthy, sweetness that is out of this world.

We have transplanted out lettuce on a regular basis and should have it coming in steadily through the summer. We are trying several new varieties that I am really excited about. In addition to the beautiful red butter that we added last year, we have found new varieties of green butter, little gem, red leaf and romaine that seem very promising. Most of our root crops are also lined up well and we should have red and gold beets, Chantenay carrots, radishes and Tokyo Market turnips coming in the near future.

And, as those of you who came out for the U-picks can testify, the strawberries are still going strong. We have weathered the annual two-spotted spider mite invasion and the plants have come through looking great. These mites feed on the underside of leaves and if left unchecked can literally dry up an entire field. To combat this pest we release a predatory mite called persimalis once every three weeks starting way back in January. We'll have one more strawberry U-pick this coming Saturday if you want to come out and see the farm in full swing.

## Recipes and Notes

(see [www.mariquita.com/recipes](http://www.mariquita.com/recipes) for more recipes)

*How Shelley Will Use this Box:* I'll caramelize the fennel to put on top of just about anything—in sandwiches, on chicken or fish. I'll probably sauté the spinach and the chard with some olive oil and garlic. Salad mix or beautiful little gem lettuce greens will go into a salad along with the cherry tomatoes (if I get them!) and chopped up chives. If I get green beans, I'll either steam them and just coat them with a bit of butter and salt and pepper. Or, I might blanch them and add them to my salads. The carrots usually get munched right out of the box—I know I'm biased but our carrots are absolutely the best carrots I've ever tasted! Strawberries will likely be cut up on top of my breakfast oatmeal or on top of ice cream! If I get basil, I'll probably shred it with sliced cherry tomatoes, fresh mozzarella balls, and drizzle olive oil, really good balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper. Yum!

### Dinner/Cooking Class

June 23rd in SF at Local Mission Eatery

There's still room to sign up for this unique dinner/class benefit for Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, a local food bank ("free restaurant"). To reserve a spot, please email Shelley at [csa@twosmallfarms.com](mailto:csa@twosmallfarms.com) and send your check (\$60 each) made payable to Two Small Farms to Two Small Farms, PO Box 2065, Watsonville, CA 95077.

### Carrot Orange Basil Soup, from Chef Jonathan Miller

This soup is intriguing and delicious. It's crucial not to get any pith or membrane from the orange in this soup, or it will be bitter and you'll wonder what all the fuss is about. Cut the peel and pith off the orange with a knife, then remove each section from the membranes with a knife. Then squeeze the remaining juice from the membranes into the bowl that catches the orange sections. Include that juice in the soup.

4 TBL butter	1 lb carrots, chopped
½ fennel bulb, chopped	1 onion, chopped
1 orange, sectioned (no pith or membranes)	1 qt chicken stock, homemade if possible
large handful of basil leaves	2 TBL crème fraiche

Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the carrots, onion, and fennel. Cook, stirring frequently so nothing browns, until the veggies soften, about 6-7 minutes. Add the orange sections and chicken stock and bring to a simmer for 45 minutes. Add the basil off the heat and allow to cool somewhat. Blend the soup thoroughly and season with salt and pepper. Check seasoning, then add the crème fraiche. Stir well and serve warm.

### Shaved Fennel and Pistachio Salad, adapted from *chow.com*

2 med or 1 large head fennel, very thinly sliced crosswise	1/3 cup roasted and salted pistachios, coarsely chopped
1-2 TBL freshly squeezed lemon juice	2 TBL olive oil
1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest	Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large nonreactive bowl and toss until fennel is coated. Season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate up to 1 day.

### Strawberries in San Francisco!

This Friday (June 18th) we will deliver pre-ordered flats to our Folsom St. San Francisco CSA pick-up site from 4–6 p.m. \$20 CSA members/\$24 non-members. E-mail Jeanne to pre-order at [csa@highgroundorganics.com](mailto:csa@highgroundorganics.com). I'll send you directions when I get your order.

We'll bring our strawberry truck to **Palo Alto** Next Week.

### Strawberry U-Pick This Saturday!

We'll have one more strawberry U-pick this Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, at High Ground Organics in Watsonville, from 9 AM - 1 PM. Check [www.highgroundorganics.com/farmevents.html](http://www.highgroundorganics.com/farmevents.html) for directions. \$1.50 per pound.

### Cottage Cheese Chive Biscuits, adapted from *grouprecipes.com*

2 cups flour	2½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt	6 TBL butter
¾ cup small curd cottage cheese	2/3 cup milk
2 TBL snipped fresh chives	

Line a baking sheet with foil and grease foil. In medium bowl combine dry ingredients. Using a pastry blender cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Make a well in mixture and set aside. In small mixing bowl combine cottage cheese, milk and chives. Add cottage cheese mixture all at once to dry mixture. Using a fork stir until just moistened. Drop by generous tablespoonfuls onto prepared baking sheet. Bake in a 425 oven for 15-18 min or until golden brown.

### Chive Salad Dressing, adapted from *recipe4living.com*

3 TBL salad oil	1 TBL vinegar
1-2 TBL minced chives	Salt and Pepper to taste
¼ tsp. paprika	1 hard cooked egg

Mix the oil, vinegar, salt, paprika and pepper; then add the minced chives and egg, chopped fine. Serve on any salad that needs some dressing!

### Baked Feta with Chard and Olives, from Chef Jonathan Miller

½ lb feta, in 1 inch thick blocks	¼ cup olive oil
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes	1 TBL fresh oregano leaves
zest from 1 lemon	2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 bunch chard, julienned	quality olives

Cut the feta into triangles and arrange them in a single layer in a baking dish. Combine 2 TBL of olive oil with the oregano, crushed pepper, zest and half of the garlic. Pour over the feta and let marinate at least 10 minutes, or up to 1 hour. Heat the other 2 TBL olive oil in a skillet and add the garlic, stirring until just golden, a couple minutes. Add the greens and cook to tender, around 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Bake the feta about 5 minutes, just until it is heated through. Transfer to a serving plate and serve with the greens and olives.

*From Mariquita Farm: cherry tomatoes, green beans, chives, carrots, basil, erbetto chard, mystery. From High Ground: strawberries, lettuce, salad mix, fennel, spinach. From Thomas Farm: flowers.*