



# TWO SMALL FARMS

## Community Supported Agriculture

November 3, 4, 5 2010

### Strawberry Trials, from Steve Pedersen at High Ground Organics

This year we will be participating in another strawberry experiment with my friend Joji Muramoto who is a researcher at The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. I enjoy working with Joji because not only are his experiments well designed and thorough, but he seeks to answer questions that are of great interest to growers. In the past we've helped him with his fertility trials--comparing rates and timing of compost and fertilizer application in organic strawberries.

The experiment this year will focus on mustard seed meal on a small portion of our strawberry field. Mustard, along with other members of the *brassica* family including broccoli, have long been known to contain compounds known as *glucosinolates*. When the residue of a broccoli crop or a mustard cover crop is incorporated into the soil, these compounds have been proven to reduce the amount of soil borne diseases. (We've experimented with different cover crops in the past and typically plant Sudan Grass before strawberries.) Since they can also reduce the number of viable weed seeds in the soil, these crops are sometimes referred to as "biofumigants".

As it turns out, if the right varieties are used, the meal that is left after mustard seeds are pressed for oil can also contain high levels of *glucosinolates*. Mustard seed meal also contains around 6% nitrogen and can be used as a fertilizer. Recently a farmer owned company called Farm Fuel Inc. started up here locally which makes biodeisel from mustard seed oil and sells the meal as a soil amendment.

Because rents are so high around here, large scale strawberry growers (even organic ones) are very reluctant to tie up land in cover crops in the middle of summer. And since mustard seed meal can be made into pellets that can be applied less than a month before planting, it is much more likely to be adopted. The fact that it serves as a fertilizer will only make it more attractive.

This year's experiment is designed to find out the optimal application rates for mustard meal. It will have three different application rates in twelve different combinations--with or without compost and with or without supplemental fertilization--in four replications for a total of 48 plots. This week we will spread the meal on top of the beds and then

make a pass with the tractor rototiller to shallowly incorporate it. Then we lay down our drip tape, cover the beds with plastic mulch, and pre-irrigate to activate the *glucosinolates*. We then wait three weeks before planting the berry plants. Over the season next year, we will compare the yields of marketable fruit between the plots, and Joji will monitor weed biomass, plant size, fertility, and the presence of fungal diseases.

Cooperating in these studies helps to forge a good relationship with researchers and insures that we are kept in the information loop. And at a time when the only alternatives conventional growers are proposing to the ozone depleting fumigant methyl bromide are even more toxic (methyl iodide), it feels good to be playing a small part in finding a real alternative.

### This Week

**Butternut Squash** MF

**Carola OR Red Gold Potatoes** HG

**Belgian White Carrots** MF

**Cauliflower OR Cabbage** HG

**Formanova & White Beets** MF

**Lola Rosa, Red Butter, OR Red Leaf Lettuce** HG

**Mystery** MF

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**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet** TF

### Hard Squash, from Andy Griffin at Mariquita Farm

This time last year we were able to put Rugosa squash in the share boxes. I've never gotten so much email about a squash; lots of people liked Rugosa squash, and some of them told me that it was their favorite squash. (For those of you who aren't so easily impressed by a squash and can't remember it, Rugosa was the tan colored, funny-looking, Butternut-like, hard squash with faintly defined ribs and a roughish, "rugose" hide, and incredibly dense, fine-grained, sweet flesh.)

Rugosa squash is certainly my favorite squash, which is why I'm sad that we haven't had a good harvest this year.

Rugosa is an heirloom squash-- that is to say it is an antique, open-pollinated vegetable. Like many heirloom vegetables with admirable qualities that are only rarely encountered in the produce aisle the Rugosa has some characteristics that make it difficult to produce under modern economic conditions. A Rugosa plant, for example, is vigorous and disease resistant but, compared to its close cousin, the Butternut, it takes an incredibly long time to produce a crop of squash. This year, the unusually cold summer weather which preceded an unusually hot fall, meant that the Rugosa squash grew much slower than normal. The plants flowered later, and the small, nascent fruits were not protected by as dense a canopy of leaves as they usually are. When the 104° temperatures suddenly came, many of the tender young squash were sunburned on one side and withered. What Rugosa squash we did harvest this season are small, deformed by poor pollination, and still greenish. I'll feed them to my goats and cows.

What we did have success with is our Butternut crop, and Butternuts are nice too. Butternuts don't take as long to mature as Rugosa do, so I planted them later and they enjoyed warmer weather during their peak growing period. When the green foliage died back in the early fall, the exposed field appeared to be paved with Butternuts. Sometimes, amid all the hoopla about the wonderful heirloom varieties we're re-discovering, it's important to applaud the more modern, "improved" veggies too. Much as I like Rugosa squash, I'm glad I have a crop of Butternut to share. This year Rugosa was just too "hard" of a squash for me to grow. Oh, well. There's always next year.

## Recipes and Notes

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

Put everything in your fridge, except the winter squash and tomatoes if you get them. Top the beets and use the greens as you would any cooking green, best within the first day or two. The beets and carrots store better and last longer without their greens. Belgian White Carrots are best for roasting or soups.

### 24 - Hour Coleslaw, from CSA Host, Roxanne C.

1 med. head of cabbage, shredded	2 onions, chopped
2/3 cup sugar	1 tsp. celery seed
1 tsp. sugar	1½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. dry mustard	1 cup cider vinegar
1 cup salad oil	

Put cabbage onions and sugar in a large bowl and toss to blend. Heat the remaining ingredients except oil in a small pan. Bring to a boil, then stir in 1 cup salad oil, and bring back to boil. Pour slowly over cabbage mixture, DO NOT STIR for 24 hours. Cover and refrigerate. (This gets better each day for a week.) Great as salad or condiment on a sandwich, under a pork chop or sausage.

### Cauliflower Soup, from CSA Host, Roxanne C.

Melt 2 TBL butter in saucepan with 1 chopped onion, add cauliflower pieces, chicken broth to cover. Bring to boil and cook over medium heat about 5 min, or until cauliflower is tender. Puree in blender, return to pan, add salt and pepper to taste. Served in a mug to sip, munching on whole grain toast or crackers is good anytime, even breakfast on a chilly morning, rushing to tackle the day.

### Unfried French Fries, adapted from *In the Kitchen with Rosie* by Rosie Daley

2 lb. potatoes	2 egg whites
1 TBL cajun spice or chile powder or curry powder....	oil cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Slice each potato into 1/4 inch ovals lengthwise then each oval into matchsticks. Coat a baking sheet with 3 sprays of the oil spray. Combine egg whites and spice in a bowl. Add the potato sticks and mix to coat. Pour the coated potatoes onto the sprayed baking sheet (I use a jelly roll pan) and spread them out into a single layer, leaving a little space in between. Place baking sheet on the bottom shelf of the oven. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the fries are crispy, turning them every 6 to 8 minutes with a spatula so that they brown evenly. Serve immediately.

## Taking Stock

Cooking Class & Lunch with **Chef Jonathan Miller**  
Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM-2 PM in Watsonville

For this class, we're preparing for cooler days and the warm comfort of stocks and soups! Stocks are easier to make than you might think and are a great way to use many of the veggies in your shares. They provide the foundation for soups, stews, and many other dishes, a few of which we'll make and have for lunch! Cost: \$55/person (net proceeds going to Ms. McGooden's Kindergarten class at Soquel Elementary, a local public school). Space is limited to 12 people. Contact Shelley to sign up at [csa@twosmallfarms.com](mailto:csa@twosmallfarms.com) or (831) 786-0625.

### Weekly Stock--Squash, from Chef Jonathan Miller

seeds, fibers, and peels from 1 butternut squash	2 fennel stalks, chopped
1 onion, chopped	1 bay leaf
6 branches parsley	6 sage leaves

Put everything in a large pot with 8 cups cold water. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 35 minutes. Strain, cool, use or freeze.

### Cabbage and Apple Slaw, from Chef Jonathan Miller

¾ cup raisins (any kind)	¼ cup red wine vinegar
3 TBL dijon or whole grain mustard	1 TBL sugar
¼ cup grapeseed oil	2 TBL walnut oil
½ head of cabbage, shredded	1-2 apples, julienned
1 carrot, shredded	½ red onion, sliced thinly
¼ cup chives	

Soak the raisins in hot water for at least 10 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Whisk the vinegar with the mustard and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Add the oils and season with salt and pepper, whisking until smooth. Toss with the cabbage, apple, carrot, onion, chives, and raisins. Check for salt and pepper and serve cool.

### Rumpledethumps (also known as Colcannon), adapted from *Sundays At Moosewood Restaurant*

2-2½ pounds potatoes	2½ cups chopped cabbage
2 leeks, washed and chopped	2½ cups coarsely chopped broccoli
6 TBL butter	¼ tsp. mace
salt and pepper to taste	¾ cup milk
1½ cups grated cheddar cheese	

Peel the potatoes, cut them into chunks, and boil them in salted water for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, steam the cabbage, leeks, and broccoli. Melt 2TBL of the butter and stir in the mace. Mix the seasoned butter and salt and pepper to taste into the steamed vegetables. Drain the potatoes and mash with 2T butter, milk and salt and pepper to taste. Stir in the seasoned veggies and mix evenly. Spread in an oiled 13X9 inch baking pan. Melt the remaining 2T butter and drizzle it over the potato mixture. Sprinkle the top with the grated cheese. Place under the broiler for 3-4 minutes or until the cheese is browned and bubbly. Serves 6

*From Mariquita Farm: butternut squash, beets, carrots, mystery. From High Ground Organics: lettuce, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, mystery. From Thomas Farm: flowers.*