

Two Small Farms Newsletter
Issue Number 288 - August 4th, 2004

In your box this week: Strawberries, Lettuces, Rapini, Scallions, Tomatoes, Baby Chard, Carrots, Cucumbers

What I'll do with my CSA Veggies. by
Jennifer Jobart

By the way, I find that basil keeps pretty well if I store it like fresh flowers. I cut 1/2" off the ends and put it in a jar of water on the countertop.

I get most of my recipes, including all named recipes here, from <http://www.epicurious.com/>. The search engine on this site isn't the greatest, so to search for the recipes, just enter 2-3 main words from the recipe title.

I'll make Orecchiette with Broccoli Rabe and Fried Chickpeas with the rapini. I'll eat this salad all week for lunch with some carrot sticks.

I'll wash the lettuce and leave it in the salad spinner so we can have instant salads with dinner all week. If I have time, I'll add some carrots, cucumbers and tomatoes to the salad on the day we eat it.

I'll make a second salad by slicing the tomatoes in half, mixing them with some bite-size chopped cucumber and some sweet onion (I still have some left over from a couple of weeks ago), and adding a dressing of olive oil, smashed garlic, and lemon juice. If I want to get really fancy, I'll add some zaatar (a Middle Eastern spice mixture of thyme, sesame seeds, sumac, and salt) to the dressing. Then I'll crumble some feta cheese on top. I'll either serve this over lettuce or in a toasted pita. We'll grill some chicken on the barbeque to go with this.

I'll make Vietnamese rice-stick noodle salad (bun) with one of the cucumbers, some grated carrot, and some chopped scallions. I'll adapt the recipe for Rice-Stick Noodle Salad with Vietnamese Shrimp, making it with shrimp, pork, chicken, steak or vegetarian, depending on our mood.

I'll make Grilled Swordfish with

Cucumber Lime Salsa with the rest of the cucumbers and some more of the scallions.

I'll cook the baby chard as follows: Steam the chard in hot water until it's cooked, but not dead. Put in a colander to drain, and carefully squeeze out as much of the water as possible. Meanwhile, heat up some olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Throw in a couple of cloves of garlic to taste and a small onion, and saute until onion is tender, about 3 minutes. Add a tablespoon of chopped fresh parsley, (or dried if you don't have fresh) and about 6 of the cherry tomatoes, quartered and seeded. Cook for 1 minute.

Increase the heat to high and add 2 tablespoons pine nuts, 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg, 2 tablespoons raisins, and the chard, and cook 2 minutes. Season to taste.

(Recipe adapted from Garlic Toasts with Swiss Chard, Raisins, and Pine Nuts on [epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)). I'll probably serve this with some lamb chops that I rub with smashed garlic, fresh rosemary, and olive oil, and throw on the barbeque to grill.

We'll either eat the strawberries as they are, or slice them up and mix them with some creme fraiche.

If you would like to try your hand at writing up the what would I do with this week's box paragraph, let me know, thanks! -Julia julia@mariquita.com

Initial veggie Notes

Storage: Everything in the fridge in a plastic bag EXCEPT the tomatoes. If you're going to eat the strawberries the same day you receive your box you can keep those out of the fridge for maximum flavor. But do chill them if you want to save them for 1 or more days.

To eat within 1-3 days: Berries, chard, rapini

That's a Lot of Bull

(editor's note: Andy wrote this story recently and didn't want to run it in the CSA newsletter because it's not pertinent to anything in the box... But he's been called away on family duties to another part of the state for a couple of days and gave permission to run this one. I hope you enjoy it. -julia)

Talk about a lot of bull, Gene said, peering between the boards of the corral. His gaze was directed at a big bull; 2000 lbs worth of purebred Brangus masculinity slapping at flies with a tail as thick at the base as a man's arm. Brangus cattle are a blend of heavily muscled Black Angus beef cattle from Scotland and the humpbacked Brahmin cattle from India. The idea had been to cross the meatiness and cold hardy traits of the Angus with the disease resistance and drought tolerance of the Brahma. Breeders hoped this experiment in bovine miscegenation would also engineer an animal with the gentle public manners of the sacred cattle that freely wander the streets of India. What we had pacing impatiently in the corral was a huge black beast who had been behaving with god-like indifference to our expectations all day.

I was sixteen, working on an eleven thousand acre cattle ranch that lay across a swath of California's high desert north of Mt. Shasta. Gene was the boss. At sunrise he had pulled us away from our bacon and eggs with a change in plans. A neighboring rancher had called in a panic because one of our Brangus bulls, ear tag number 109, had broken a fence and was making whoopie in a herd of purebred Holstein heifers being boarded on his ranch. If those heifers got pregnant before they could be bred to a dairy bull they would give birth to lawsuits. We saddled up.

Number 109 was a brute of a sire, inexplicably named Slim Princess by the breeder. Slim wasn't slim, nor was he much of a princess, apart from the willful way he tossed his massive head. His coat was jet black and sleek. His heavy dewlap fell in satiny folds across a broad chest and his testicles were as big as cantaloupes. Gene had other things to do that summer morning but surely the three of us, Ron, Jose, and myself, would be able to herd one dumb beef.

We set out across a bare, rolling plain. Shasta loomed like Fuji to the south. The sunburned yellow landscape was scattered with small, black, volcanic rocks to remind us that this scene had not always been so meditative. After a

few miles we found the hole Slim Princess had bulldozed in the fence. Steel posts were folded flat and barbed wires were snapped and slack. This Princess wasn't taking celibacy lying down. Another mile of easy riding brought us to a slope ending in a drift of willows and green grass that marked the trickle of the Little Shasta River in summer. Slim was wallowing in the lush pasture with his virgin harem. After the rocky desert the smell of cattle, water, and trampled grass hung in the air like steam.

We parted Slim out from the heifers and drove him several hundred yards back towards our ranch. He complied, amiably enough, until it occurred to him that his girlfriends and his sweet green grass were shrinking in the distance. Then he turned, went around us, and lumbered back. We chased him out of the herd again and yelled louder. Slim got irritated and crashed right through us. The horses began to have second thoughts. By high noon we were three defeated cowpokes swatting at flies; hot, tired, and dirty.

A silhouette of horse and rider appeared on the crest of a bluff behind us; Gene had finished his chores.

You fellahs have rocks in your sombreros,? Gene was grinning as he cantered up.

We were sullen.

This is one bull-headed toro.

Watch, commanded Gene. He dismounted, swept his black, felt cowboy hat off his head, and commenced to fill it with lava rocks about the size and heft of goose eggs.

We swung down from our horses and hobbled around sore-tailed on a hunt for more stones. When we each had ten gallons worth of lava rocks we hauled ourselves back into our saddles. Gene rode slowly through the heifers down in the river bottom until he drew alongside Slim. He took a rock and, aiming carefully, hit the bull square on the top of the head. Slim's ears

twitched and he craned his neck to sniff at another heifer. Another rock flew. The bull snorted. A third stone provoked Slim to spin around, lower his head, and charge.

Yahoo, Gene yelled as he and his horse scampered off with Slim Princess in pursuit. Ron closed in to fire another volley of lava rocks and Slim chased him too. Then I gave it a try. Then Jose. By the time our hats were emptied the bull had chased us over a rise and the heifers were out sight and out of mind. The four of us fell behind Slim as he plodded along and let him lead the way back to the ranch. Gene told stories and counseled us as we clopped along. When you get mad you get stupid, he said. Snowy Shasta looked down on our dusty little parade impassively.

The sun was low in the sky when we closed the gate on the bull pen. The horses drank from the trough while we considered our day's work.

One animal is harder to herd than a thousand, Gene remarked, by way of giving our sore butts and bruised pride a little relief.... But you can drive any animal anywhere if you can convince it that it was its own idea all along.

Is that true with people too? I asked. You know, like politics?

Gene bent to peer through the boards of the corral at Slim Princess. Yeah,....Talk about a lot of bull....

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Recipes from Julia

Do you still have tomatillos from last week? I'd advise making a simple salsa with it and then offering that to your family in the next few days with a meal of tacos or burritos, or offer it as an

appetizer with corn chips. It's quite easy: remove husks of the tomatillos, wash, then put in a large saucepan with one cut up onion and 2-3 garlic cloves and a pinch of salt, with water to barely cover. Cook over med. high heat til the tomatillos are cooked to soft doneness. Let cool, then put in blender with more salt, chopped chiles of the spiciness you desire, 1 clove fresh raw garlic, 1 onion, quartered, or some scallions. Whirl and you have great salsa.

them overnight in cold water, or in hot water for one hour. Drain them and set aside. Heat the butter in a saucepan and saute the onion until light brown. Add the carrots and turnip and continue cooking 5 mins. Add the peas and veg stock, and stir well. Cover the pan, bring to a boil, and simmer 1 - 1 1/2 hours until the peas are really tender. Stir occasionally, and add water if necessary. Season to taste

this recipe includes a tomatillo salsa!:

Chard and Potato Enchiladas

Enchiladas:

1/2 pound Swiss chard (stems and leaves), rinsed
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus as needed
1 teaspoons kosher salt
6 ounces Yukon gold potatoes, cut into 1/2 inch dice
1/2 medium onion, chopped
2 teaspoons minced garlic
Fresh ground pepper
4 ounces cojito cheese, crumbled, divided
8 corn tortillas

Tomatillo Salsa:

8 tomatillos (about 12 ounces), husked and well rinsed
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 medium onion, coarsely chopped
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 jalapeno chile (with seeds)
1/4 cup chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)
Serving suggestions: sour cream
To make the enchiladas filling: Strip the leaves

from the stems of the Swiss chard, and chop the leaves and coarsely slice the stems; and set aside.

In a large skillet over medium high heat, heat the 2 tablespoons oil. Add the potatoes and cook until golden brown and tender, about 8 minutes. Season with 1/4 teaspoon of the salt, and pepper, to taste. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon, and drain on a paper towel-lined plate. Add the onions and garlic, and cook until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the Swiss chard stems, cook until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the leaves, and remaining salt and pepper, cover, stirring occasionally, until the leaves are wilted, about 5 minutes more. Transfer the mixture to a strainer over a medium bowl, drain off any excess liquid, and cool. Combine the potatoes with 1/2 cup of the cheese and the Swiss chard mixture, and set aside.

To make the salsa: Put the tomatillos in a medium saucepan and cover with water by about an inch. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until tender, about 7 minutes.

In a blender, combine the onions, garlic, jalapeno, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and puree until smooth. Using a slotted spoon transfer the tomatillos to the blender, along with about 1/4-cup of the cooking liquid, puree until smooth. Add the coriander and blend briefly.

To assemble the enchiladas: Pour enough vegetable oil into a skillet so it is about a 1/4 deep, and heat over high heat. Fry the tortillas one at a time, until they are soft, about 5 seconds. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Pour about a cup of the tomatillo salsa into the bottom of 13 by 9 inch baking dish. Put 2 heaping tablespoon of the Swiss chard mixture in the center each tortilla and roll them up. Place the tortillas, seams side down, on the sauce laying the enchiladas snugly next to one other. Spoon the remaining sauce over the enchiladas and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake until the enchiladas are heated through and the cheese is softened, about 20 minutes. Serve with sour

cream on top, if desired.

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Chard in Dijon Mustard Sauce

adapted from More Recipes from a Kitchen Garden by Shepherd & Raboff

2 T olive oil

1 scallions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1/2 pound sliced mushrooms

1 bunch chard, finely shredded, including stems

1 T Dijon mustard

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Sauté the scallions and

garlic for 2 minutes until softened and tender. Add

mushrooms and cook 4 to 5 minutes more. Add

chard, cover and cook over low heat for about

5 minutes, or until chard is tender but still crisp.

Mix in mustard and heat 1 to 2 minutes more.

Stir and serve immediately.

More Chard Recipes:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/chard.html>

Rapini!

RAPINI: also called raab, broccoli rabe, cime de rape, rape and

brocoletti. It s a form of turnip green. I found a one-page article

about it in Cook s Illustrated (Jan/Feb 1999) that told me more about

rapini than a shelf of vegetable cookbooks. Here s some thoughts and

recipes from Anne Yamanaka who wrote the article:

After trying several ways of blanching the greens, she decided the best was boiling 1 bunch of rapini in 3 quarts of salted water. Here s the official recipe:

Blanched Broccoli Raab (Rapini)

Cook s Illustrated

Using a salad spinner makes easy work of drying the cooled blanched broccoli rabe.

1 bunch rapini (broccoli rabe), about 14 ounces, washed, bottom 2 inches of stems trimmed and discarded, remainder cut into 1-inch pieces

2 teaspoons salt

Bring 3 quarts water to boil in large saucepan. Stir in rapini greens and salt and cook until wilted and tender, about 2 1/2 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Cool empty saucepan by rinsing under cold running water. Fill cooled saucepan with cold water and submerge greens to stop the cooking process. Drain again; squeeze well to dry and proceed with one of the following recipes.

Rapini with garlic and red pepper flakes

2 T extra virgin olive oil

3 medium garlic cloves
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 recipe blanched rapini greens (above)

Heat oil, garlic and red pepper flakes in medium skillet over medium

heat until garlic begins to sizzle, about 3 to 4 minutes. Increase heat

to medium high, add blanched rapini greens, and cook, stirring to coat

with oil, until heated through, about 1 minute. Season to taste with salt, serve immediately.

Rapini with Sun Dried Tomatoes and Pine Nuts

Follow recipe for Rapini with Garlic and Red Pepper Flakes, adding 1/4

cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, cut into thin strips, along with

garlic and red pepper flakes. Add 3 Tablespoons toasted pine nuts to

skillet along with rapini greens.

Rapini with Asian Flavors

adapted from Lettuce in Your Kitchen by Willoughby

Mix 1 Tablespoon soy sauce, 1 1/2 teaspoons rice wine vinegar, 1

teaspoon toasted sesame oil, and 1 teaspoon sugar in small bowl; set

aside. Follow recipe for Rapini with Garlic and Red Pepper Flakes,

substituting vegetable oil for the olive oil and adding 1/2 teaspoon

finely grated ginger along with garlic and red pepper flakes.

Add reserved soy sauce mixture to skillet along

with rapini.

More rapini recipes:

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MICRO-QUICK HOT-SWEET SALAD OF BROCCOLI RAAB AND CARROTS

I'm not a big fan of microwaving, but in this case, it preserves both vegetables' deep color and nutrients as it speeds cooking. The honey and sweet sherry accents temper the bitter broccoli raab for a side dish that's fast, fresh, pretty.

1 hearty bunch broccoli raab (1 pound plus)
About 1 pound fairly thin medium carrots (weighed without tops)
1 tablespoon sweet sherry or sweet vermouth
1 tablespoon cider vinegar or balsamic vinegar
1 1/2 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon ground hot pepper
2 tablespoons peanut or corn oil
1 tablespoon Asian (dark) sesame oil

1. Cut a slice from broccoli raab base and taste to determine toughness. If fairly tender, trim only 1/2 inch or so from stalks; if tough, trim more. Wash vegetable in several changes of water, lifting out so debris settles. Without drying, spread in microwavable serving dish. Cover with plastic wrap and cook for 2 minutes. Toss, then continue cooking until not quite done, 1 to 2 minutes more. Pierce plastic and allow to cool.

2. Peel carrots. Place in microwavable dish.

Cover with plastic wrap. Cook just until carrots lose their raw crunch but are *not* cooked through 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Pierce plastic and cool slightly.

3. In a small dish, mix sherry, vinegar, honey, salt and hot pepper to taste, stirring to blend. Add peanut and sesame oils.

4. Line up broccoli raab stems on cutting board. Cut apart from tops (the florets and leaves). Squeeze tops dry, then blot with towel. Cut into very thin shreds; return to dish. Slice stems on a sharp angle to form long oblongs 1/8 inch thick; add to dish. Cut carrots the same way and add to dish. Toss with dressing. Season. Chill. Serves 4

Broccoli Raab

James Peterson, *Vegetables*

Serving Size : 4

2 pounds broccoli raab
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon white or brown pale miso
1/4 cup mirin or 6 tsp sugar dissolved in 3 Tbsp hot water
1 teaspoon Asian dark sesame oil
2 teaspoons white sesame seeds

Cut the broccoli raab flowers and leaves away from the larger stems. Discard the stems. Rinse and drain the leaves and flowers in a colander.

Bring about 4 quarts of water to a rapid boil with the salt. Boil the broccoli raab for five minutes, uncovered, over high heat, and drain in a colander. Immediately rinse the broccoli with cold water and pat it dry in towels or spin it in a lettuce spinner to get rid of excess water. In a mixing bowl large enough to hold the broccoli raab, work the miso, mirin and, and the sesame oil to a paste with a whisk. Just before serving, tossed the broccoli raab with the the paste. Arrange the broccoli on one large plate and sprinkle with the sesame seeds or arrange it on individual plates and sprinkle each serving within the sesame seeds.