

In your box this week:

Beets, Basil, Romaine Lettuce, Bunched Spinach, Green Beans, Baby Turnips, mystery. Wednesday deliveries: garlic, and either broccoli or strawberries; Thursday Deliveries: Spring onions, strawberries

Preliminary Vegetable Notes

All items except berries and basil should be stored in a plastic bag in the fridge. The basil can be set in a jar with water, just like a flower bouquet. The garlic can be left out, or can be refrigerated. Remove the beet and turnip greens and use within a day. Can be cooked just like chard, or add in to your spinach dish.

To Eat First: Strawberries, broccoli, green beans, beet and turnip greens. The green beans will easily keep for at least a few days, but like broccoli and cauliflower are a tasty treat when truly fresh. To eat second (within 1-5 days) spinach, basil, lettuce, turnips, green onions. Eat within 2 weeks: Beets.

Field Mallows written by Andy

Once upon a time marshmallows were made out of the roots of mallows from marshes, now they re made from a viscous protein solution, like gelatin, that s been whipped full of air and sugar. The marsh mallow, or *Althaea officinalis*, is a weedy relative of *Gossypium hirsutum*, the cotton plant, *Althaea rosea*, the Hollyhock, and my favorite mallow, *Bastardia viscosa* var. *sanctae-crucis*, the Viscous *Bastardia* from Santa Cruz. My least favorite mallow, because I have so much of it, is *Malva parviflora*, or Cheeseweed. Plants in the mallow family are typically viscous or mucilaginous when you crush them.

It was the mallow s slime that was spun to make the earliest confectionary marshmallows. A

number of different Mallow species have curative properties and are good for soothing coughs and healing wounds. Marshmallow candies originally served as a palatable delivery system for the medicine. Today, except for cotton and hollyhock, most mallows are economically important only in the sense that their weedy habits cost farmers a lot of money. When you tug at a cheeseweed in your garden and the root breaks off in your hand you ll feel its slimy, healing juices. But good luck pulling the cheese weed up; its fibrous root is tough as rope and it s knotted tight to Hell..

So why do they call mallow *parviflora* cheeseweed when it s slimy, fibrous and tough?

Cheeseweed has a schizocarp shaped like a cheese wheel. Schizocarp is fancy botanical talk for a fruit that splits up into pieces. The ten seeds that make up each cheeseweed fruit fall like rain when the plant matures and remain vital in the soil for years. On bad days I think I remember hearing a story one morning years ago on National Public Radio where some scientists discovered a ceramic jar full of seeds in an undisturbed Anasazi cave dwelling that was five thousand years old. So, hoping to discover new facts about ancient agriculture, they planted the contents. Only the mallow seeds sprouted.

So how does a farmer like me rid a plot of ground of mallow without resorting to powerful toxic chemicals that defy the ages?

First, before planting, we pre-irrigate the field we re going to plant. Mallow seeds sprout quickly once they ve been refreshed with a drink of water. Then we plant our crop. After the mallow seeds have sprouted but before the crop we ve sown has germinated we pass over the weedy bed with a hand held gas torch. The mallow seedlings are tender and wilt to death at the merest touch of flame. Bigger organic farms use tractor mounted torches. You can call this organic weeding technique roasting field mallows if you want.

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Recipes from Andrew and Julia

notes from Andrew Cohen, chef and friend of the two farms:

BEETS:

I usually cook my beets in the oven because I don't have to worry about the steamer running dry. Heat oven to 450F. Cut stems off, but leave an inch or so attached. Wash the beets, toss in a little oil to lightly coat, sprinkle with a little S&P and place in a sheet of foil large enough to tightly cover the beets. Before sealing the m, drizzle water into the packet(1/2 C), then seal tightly.

Place the packet in a pie pan and bake in the middle of the oven until tender, 45 minutes to an hour for medium to large beets. If steaming- use the same prep, omitting the oil and just steam over water until tender. Check your water level frequently. When the beets are tender(use a thin knife to check- the blade should pierce the beet easily) remove from the cooking vessel and peel as soon as you can handle them without burning yourself. The skins should slip off easily, but if there is some truculent skin use a knife to pare this away. At this point, while beets are still hot, pour some white wine or sherry vinegar over the beets and allow to cool.

If I m going to use the beets cut into a wedge shape or large cubes, I cut them and then pour the vinegar on. Add a pinch of S&P and toss again. Allow to cool. This is my basic beet prep- I cook the beets then set aside for later usage. From here I can use them in salads, appetizers, saute them for a dinner side, etc.

Beet and Avocado Salad/Appetizer: Cube cooked beets into 1/4" pieces. Toss in a light vinaigrette(go easy with the oil- dressing should be a little sharp) and season with S&P. Place in the bottom of a small(2-3 inch) ring mold. Cube some avocado and place an equal amount on the beets. Toss some micro-greens, sprouts, or fine leaves of bitter greens such as arugula and frisee with just a bare touch of the dressing, and place on top of the avo. Cut some candied ginger into

tiny cubes and scatter all around and on the "salad". Remove the mold. At this point my favorite garnish is pistachio oil. Hazelnut or pumpkinseed oil work well for this too. A note about the dressing used; I make a slack dressing using white balsamic vinegar, or a light sherry vinegar. An Orange or Blood Orange dressing works well in this dish as well. Use some juice from an orange with some vinegar in the dressing. You could omit the pistachio or hazelnut oils and add in a pinch of cinnamon to the beets for a different twist.

Sauteed Beets

Cut beets into wedges and toss in olive oil. Heat a pan over medium heat, and when hot, toss in the beets. Cook to heat through and crisp the sides. Season with S&P, and garnish with a sprinkle of herbs and/or a drizzle of vinegar such as balsamic or sherry. Or toss with a pinch of cinnamon or Chinese 5-Spice and orange juice.

Salad with beets: Chop romaine lettuce into 1 inch bits. Wedge beets (cut into wedges)

and toss with a lightly sweet vinaigrette and chill. Toss beets with some blue cheese, or feta, or a goat cheese, add in some toasted almonds and some golden raisins and toss to mix well. Lay over the romaine lettuce and drizzle a little more dressing over all.

This salad can work with spinach as well, but I would turn up the sweetness of the dressing a bit more. You could do this using a sweeter vinegar or by adding a sweetener to the dressing. This will offset the earthier flavor of the spinach.

Some more **strawberry** thoughts: Add sliced berries directly to your favorite pancake or waffle batter. Make sure the waffle iron is well seasoned or given extra lubrication. Toss sliced berries with a little sugar and vanilla extract. Fold into mascarpone and stuff into pockets of thick sliced bread for French Toast.

Broccoli di cicco: heat a 10" skillet over medium-high heat and film with olive oil. Rinse the broccoli and toss into the pan(It will make a LOT of noise...). Allow to cook until it starts to turn a darker shade, then toss. Add a 1/2 C of water, cover for just a couple minutes, then remove cover. Continue to toss until broccoli is just cooked. Some parts and many leaves should get crispy. Make a little space in the middle, add a T of oil and 1 or 2 T of minced garlic. Allow to soften a little and toss to mix. A pinch of S&P and a squeeze of lemon juice from 1/4-1/2 of a Meyer lemon and it's ready.

This dish would be good with a pinch of chili flakes. This could be tossed with pasta such as whole whole spaghetti or a bucatini. Skip the chili and add olives and onions with the pasta, or for something heartier you could also toss in some Italian sausage.

Red Garlic

Trim the tops and tails of the entire head, toss in oil and wrap in foil. Roast in a 450F oven until very soft(~30 min). When you can handle them without burning yourself, squeeze the heads over a bowl and catch the paste that results.

Use as a spread on toasts, as part of a marinade, in a dressing, in soup...

Candied Garlic cloves; Peel 3 heads if garlic. Place in a small pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil(BTAB), and drain. Repeat. Put the cloves back in the pot, add 2 t of sugar and just enough butter to lubricate the lot. Over low heat, melt the sugar, then add just enough dense stock to come to the top of the lot. Cook slowly to reduce the stock to a glaze but not turn the garlic to mush. You might reduce the stock before you add it to the pot to decrease the risk of "mushing" the garlic. You can also use some port at the begining in lieu of the sugar. The cloves can be part of the garnish for a dish, tossed with vegetables such as the aforementioned beets or some green beans, used with pot roast or steak, or as part of a bruschetta

tray.

Basil; Well pesto is the obvious, but how about a basil oil? Dunk a bunch of basil in boiling water, count five seconds and dunk in ice water to arrest the cooking.

Dry well in a towel and use a sharp knife to cut the basil into small bits. Add to a blender and add twice as much fruity olive oil and puree well. Not too long or the oil will start to heat which cooks the basil and gives it a ghastly khaki color. Steep overnight in the fridge. Allow to return to room temp. and then strain through a coffee filter or a piece of sheet or tea towel you don't care about anymore. Use this oil as a garnish on a plate or when you need basil flavor and are out of fresh basil. I like to use it on sandwiches, in pasta, and with fish or shrimp dishes.

Cut a pocket in a chicken breast or pork chop and slide a piece of mozzarella cheese wrapped in basil into the pocket. Cook the meat as you please. Toss finely slivered basil into robust salads just before serving. Saute shrimp in garlic, add a shot of pastis or ansiette(licorice flavored liquors), flame and remove shrimp from pan. Add a 1/2 C of white wine, reduce, add 2T of butter, swirl to emulsify and add shredded basil, toss shrimp into the pan and toss to coat, and serve.

Spinach; Wash well and toss into a hot pan with 1T of olive oil. As the spinach wilts, toss in 1T of minced garlic. Toss to distribute evenly and cook to soften.

Add in toasted pine nuts. I have also done this with golden raisins macerated in grappa tossed into the mix.

Green Beans; Blanch in a very large pot til just cooked. Shock in an ice water bath. Mix a red wine shallot vinaigrette with creme fraiche(or yogurt or whipped cream) and dress the beans. Serve as is or add to some soft lettuces or arugula.

Mix 1T of light miso, 1t mirin, 1t of grated

ginger juice, and a 1/2C of mayonnaise. Taste and adjust flavors. Blanch beans, but do not shock. Toss with some of the dressing and arrange in a heat proof dish. Spread the rest of the dressing over the top of the beans and place under a pre-heated broiler until the dressing browns and bubbles (gratinées). People will swear it is some kind of cheese sauce.

Turnips; Peel and wedge the turnips. In a saute pan with 1 inch of water, BTAB (bring back to a boil) and cover. Cook just until the turnips are starting to soften. Drain, sprinkle with some sugar and cook just to start caramelizing the sugar. Add a T of butter, a shot of neutral oil, and cook over medium heat to crisp the flats. After the second side is almost done, turn up the heat and add the just washed and chopped greens to the pan. Toss to cook evenly. Season. You can also add chopped garlic just before the greens, or you could add a little red wine vinegar enhance the sweet and sour approach of the turnips.

Julia s favorite pesto:

BASIL PESTO

3 T pine nuts or almonds, lightly toasted
1 Cup lightly packed basil leaves
2 T Italian parsley leaves
1 lg. clove garlic, thinly sliced
1/3 Cup olive oil
parmesan cheese
salt

In a food processor (or blender), combine nuts, basil, parsley, and garlic. Pulse, until well chopped. With motor running, add oil in a stream. Transfer mixture to a bowl and stir in cheese and salt to taste. Store with a thin layer of oil to keep fresh and green. (The parsley helps keep the bright green color too.)

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