

Two Small Farms Newsletter  
Issue Number 310 - March 30th, 2005

In your box this week: Erbette chard, spring onions, sorrel, green leaf lettuce, turnips, leeks, beets or another item.

### Notes about the Box

Storage & Notes: All items this week will do better with refrigeration. The greens should be eaten first, I would eat the lettuce within 3-5 days, the chard & sorrel within 2-4 days, the leek (it says leeks above but I think you're getting one large leek in fact) and roots should last for at least a week if not longer in the fridge.

Leek preparations: you can use it many places you would an onion, mostly it's cooked. To clean: cut away and discard or use for broth the darkest green part of the leek. Then slice the medium green and white part of the leek lengthwise, this makes it easier to rinse out any remaining dirt. Leeks are designed by nature to hold on to a bit of the earth they grew in.

The Erbette chard is an Italian, green, thin stemmed variety that Andy and I favor so it's the kind we usually grow. It's a bit less chalky than the Swiss varieties, it's nearly interchangeable with spinach in most cooked applications, at least according to me. Let us know how you like to use it.

Sorrel: the short course: use it in a salad on its own or mixed with the lettuce. It can also be thinly sliced or roughly chopped and added to a potato leek soup or a pea soup or another soup just before serving.

Turnips: the short course: grate into a green salad or make a grated turnip salad by adding some chopped green onion and a simple vinaigrette, possibly some grated parmesan or crumbled feta too. Add some cooked, cooled couscous or firm brown rice

and you've got the better part of a simple meal done. Turnips can also be diced or grated and added to a vegetable or chicken soup, and they play the potato role, but they don't fall apart as easily. Try it.

Below is a talk about this week's vegetables from Zelda, our new CSA manager

-Julia

### Perspectives on Rain, by Stephen Pedersen

Some time ago when I was selling at a weekend farmer's market in late summer, I was taken aback when a woman approached and said that she had been praying for me. She was praying for all farmers she said because it hadn't rained in months and she assumed that our crops were withering in the field.

Because I had partially developed the adversarial relationship to rain that most western farmers have and also because it never rains here in summer, I wasn't sure how to respond. Then I recalled the preconceived notions that I had of farming from my childhood. The farms in the books I read were based on models from the east and mid-west during the early part of the last century. According to these books farmers planted their seeds before a rain and relied on periodic rainfall throughout the growing season to see the crop through to maturity. And while this is still the case with some crops in certain parts of the country, it definitely isn't the case here. Because we receive virtually no rainfall between May and September we have to rely on irrigation for nearly all of our crops. And since western farmers have become accustomed to irrigating where one has control over the timing, amount, and the location of the water applied natural rainfall isn't always appreciated.

This season has been a challenging one in regards to rainfall. When the fields are excessively wet we cannot get in with our tractors and implements to work up the ground, and when two unseasonably strong storms arrived last October we nearly weren't able to get our strawberries planted as early as we wanted to. The timing and frequency of storms since then has also created problems for our vegetable production. Starting in late January most years we start looking for breaks in the rainfall long enough to allow the ground to dry out. Working around the rainfall in this way we usually are able to get ground worked up and to do some early planting. The quantity of water that has fallen this year has meant that the ground never fully dried out during the few breaks that we have had and our planting schedule is off as a consequence.

Then there's the strawberries. The strawberry plants are beautiful and they are loaded with flowers and green fruit that we'll be able to harvest soon. There are ripe berries that we could have picked for you this week, except that rain ruins the ripe fruit. If the soft ripe berries get wet, they develop a fungal disease called botrytis. Botrytis will spread quickly in the strawberry patch if left alone, so we need to pick the plants clean of the ripe fruit and dispose of it away from the berry patch.

All is not lost. We were able to do some early planting and planted some crops last fall for this spring's harvest (like the broccoli and the cauliflower you should get in the next week or so). We have successive plantings of salad greens coming along nicely, as well as bok choy, spinach, cilantro, parsley, broccoli raab, beets, scallions, and baby turnips. Plus Andy has a lot planted at Mariquita Farm. We can get some vegetables for your boxes from other

local organic farms, too, though many of them are in the same situation.

This week filling your boxes is going to be challenging. If they end up on the small side, please know that we will make up for it over the next month. Meanwhile, we'll try to appreciate the rain as it fills the reservoirs and recharges the aquifers.

**What to do with this week's CSA box:**  
from Zelda Stoltzfus, Two Small Farms  
CSA manager

**Beets** I love beets, just plain, or if I'm feeling really rich, with a dollop of sour cream. Another favorite though, comes from Moosewood Daily Specials Cookbook. Prepare and cook beets as below.

Meanwhile, make a dressing/marinade of: 1/3 cup tamari sauce, 1/4 cup green onion, 2 garlic cloves minced, 1 Tablespoon fresh grated ginger, and 1/2 cup lemon juice. Press 1# of tofu between two plates with a heavy book on top for 15 minutes, to remove excess water. Slice tofu into bit sized chunks and let sit in half of dressing for 10 minutes or so. Add cooked beets if you want the tofu to turn pink or leave separate. Moosewood serves this over cooked spinach, but I always liked it served over uncooked salad greens. You can serve it topped on your sorrel or leaf lettuce for a filling, tasty salad; add more dressing as needed.

There are a couple options for cooking your beets

**To boil:** trim leaves without cutting into beet and leave the root end attached. Do not peel before cooking so the beet will retain its color and nutritional value. In a saucepan, cover beets with water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. You should be able to easily pierce with a knife. Drain, and once cool enough to handle, the skins should easily remove. You can peel the skins

holding the beet under cool running water so that your beets are still warm when you eat them.

To bake: Preheat oven to 375. Trim leaves without cutting into beet and leave the root end attached. Do not peel before cooking so the beet will retain its color and nutritional value. Arrange beets in single layer in 13x9x2-inch baking dish; add 1 cup water. Cover and bake for 45 minutes to an hour, until easily pierced with a knife. Peel off skins when they have cooled enough to handle.

Chard and sorrel I'm a soup lover, and CSA member Alice Englander wrote in last week with a soup suggestion, Caldo Verde; I've made this before as well and loved it. Very easy and quick. I believe it is usually made with kale, but that can easily be substituted with the chard or sorrel. We've included the recipe below.

Turnips Moosewood also has a split pea soup which is a favorite of mine. Pure comfort food. Rinse and soak 2 cups split peas for at least four hours or set them to soak before you leave for work in the morning. After soaking, drain, rinse in a colander. In your soup pot, heat oil and add the following chopped items: 3 turnips, 2 carrots, 1 leek plus half an onion 2 potatoes. Saute for a few minutes then add 8 cups water or stock and your split peas. Bring to a boil, lower heat to a simmer and add a teaspoon each of ground cumin, dried marjoram and thyme; 2-3 teaspoons ground mustard, 1/4 teaspoon all spice; salt and plenty of black pepper. Simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. Once peas are soft to the point of disintegrating, puree or leave it chunky. Julia suggests adding in sorrel if you'd like just before serving. This is super with some sharp cheese and good bread.

And whenever I run out ideas, my favorite web searches are at [mariquita.com/recipes](http://mariquita.com/recipes) or

at [epicurious.com](http://epicurious.com)

**RECIPES** from Zelda, Alice, Jeanne, & Julia

**PEPPERY TURNIP TREAT** from Jane Brody's *Good Food Book*

2 teaspoons butter

2 Tablespoons honey

1 pound turnips, peeled, finely diced

1/2 to 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 Tablespoon minced fresh parsley (optional. Could also add dried oregano or dill)

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter and honey over moderately low heat. Add the turnips and pepper. Cover the pan, and cook the turnips until they are tender, stirring them once, about 12 minutes (the turnips should brown lightly). Sprinkle the turnips with parsley or other herbs.

**Sorrel Sauce for Fish** from The Peppermill Rest. in Clearwater, FL

1/2 cup chopped fresh sorrel

2 T dry white wine

3 T minced green onions

1 cup whipping cream

1 1/2 t fresh lime juice

Ground white pepper

Combine sorrel, wine and shallots in heavy small saucepan. Stir over medium heat until sorrel wilts, about 2 minutes. Add cream and lime juice. Boil until reduced to sauce consistency, about 12 minutes. Transfer sauce to blender. Puree until almost smooth. Return sauce to same saucepan. Season with ground white pepper and salt.

**CALDO VERDE**

1 large onion, finely chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 1/2 lb boiling potatoes

8 cups water

1/2 lb Spanish chorizo, cut into 1/2 inch pieces (or use Italian sausage, or add in some winter squash and omit the meat altogether)

1 bunch erbette chard cut crosswise into thin slices

Cook onion in oil in a 5-quart pot over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until pale golden. Meanwhile, peel potatoes and cut crosswise into thin slices. Add to onion and cook, stirring occasionally, 4 minutes. Add water and salt to taste and simmer until potatoes are very tender, about 15 minutes.

Cook chorizo in a large nonstick skillet over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer to paper towels to drain.

Coarsely mash potatoes in pot with a potato masher (do not drain). Stir in chorizo and simmer 5 minutes. Stir in kale and simmer until just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Season with salt.

### **SAUTEED CHARD WITH GARLIC AND RED PEPPER**

1 T olive oil

2 cloves garlic (or 2 stalks green garlic, cleaned as you would a leek)

2 pinches red pepper flakes

1 large bunch chard

pinch Salt

Juice of 1/2 lemon or a few teaspoons red wine vinegar

Heat the oil with the garlic and pepper flakes in a wide skillet over medium-high heat until the garlic begins to color. Add the cooked spinach and toss to coat it with the oil. Add 1/2 cup water and cook until it's absorbed and the greens are heated through. Season with salt and a little lemon juice or

vinegar.

### **Fettuccine with Swiss Chard, Currants, Walnuts, and Brown Butter.**

Adapted from *Fields of Greens* Serves 2 to 4  
1/3 cup brown butter (recipe follows)

1 tablespoon dried currants

2 tablespoons golden raisins

1 bunch chard

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 onion, thinly sliced

Salt and pepper

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1/2 pound fresh fettuccine

1/3 cup walnut pieces, toasted

Grated Parmesan cheese

Make the brown butter (see below)\*\* and keep it warm over very low heat. Set a large pot of water on the stove to boil. Plump the currants and golden raisins in a small bowl covered with 1/3 cup hot water. Trim the stems from the chard and slice across the leaves to make 2-inch wide ribbons.

Heat the olive oil in a large sauti pan; add the onion, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and a few pinches of pepper. Saute over medium heat for about 5 minutes, until the onion softens and begins to release its juices. Add the garlic, chard, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Saute for 4 to 5 minutes, until the chard is just barely tender, then reduce the heat to low.

When the water boils, add 1 teaspoon salt. Add the fettuccine to the boiling water, timing it to finish cooking with the chard. (The chard should be very tender but not overcooked when the pasta is done.) When the pasta is just tender, drain it immediately in a colander, shake off excess water, and add it to the onions and chard, along with the plumped fruit, walnuts, and brown butter. Toss together and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with freshly grated Parmesan.

## **\*\*Brown Butter**

1/2 pound unsalted butter

Melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. As the butter gently simmers, the butter fat and milk solids will separate from each other. The solids will settle to the bottom of the pan, coloring the butter as it cooks.

When it turns a rich amber color, in about 8 to 10 minute, remove from the heat. Line a fine-mesh strainer with a paper towel or cheese-clots and pour the butter through it, straining out the solids. The butter can be used immediately or cooled and refrigerated in a sealed container. Makes about 3/4 cup.

## **BEETS AND CARAMELIZED ONIONS WITH FETA**

Adapted from the magazine Gourmet  
September 2003

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard (preferably whole-grain or coarse-grain)

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

3/4 teaspoon salt

5 tablespoons olive oil

1 lb onions (2 medium), quartered

lengthwise, then cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces

1 bunch beets, cooked, peeled and quartered

3 oz crumbled feta (1/2 cup)

1/4 cup pine nuts (1 oz), toasted and coarsely chopped

Whisk together vinegar, mustard, pepper, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a large bowl, then add 3 tablespoons oil in a slow stream, whisking until combined well.

Cook onions with remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 18 to 20 minutes. Add onions to dressing, and then add beets and cheese, stirring gently to combine. Serve sprinkled with pine nuts.

Two Small Farms/Mariquita Farm recipe database

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