

Two Small Farms Newsletter

Issue Number 334 September 21st, 2005

In your box this week: Strawberries, San Marzano Tomatoes, Romaine Lettuce, Cabbage, Dandelion Greens, either Cubanelle or Pimiento Peppers. Wednesday deliveries: Summer Squash and Broccoli. Thursday deliveries: Artichokes and Eggplant.

What's Coming in the Box?

We update this page on Monday (usually in the morning) in case you want to know before this newsletter comes out:

<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/CSAinfo/thisweeksklist.html>

Coming next week: Heirloom Plums: Elephant Hearts from Blossom Bluff Orchards. More about these plums in next week's newsletter. Also coming: we're in the process of 'adopting' a farm similar to our own that was devastated by hurricane Katrina. We'll have more information about them and how we can all help next week. Stay tuned. If you want information before next Monday night, check our homepage at www.mariquita.com And lastly: We will have a CSA pumpkin patch in early October, both farmers (Steve and Andy) are waiting to see what the weather does, how soon the pumpkins are ready, and how soon they can get their winter planting done before they'll agree on an exact date. Stay tuned!

Dandelions, an article, by Andy Griffin, the farmer/owner of Mariquita Farm. (Chef Andrew Cohen, our friend, wrote his own 'how to cook the dandies' piece below, #6)

The dandelion greens sold in supermarkets are not typically the same dandelions, or even the same breed of dandelions, as the yellow flowered weeds we see squeezing out of the cracks in the asphalt parking lot behind the supermarkets.

Dandelion is a common name applied without precision to a number of weedy annual herbs that have jagged edged leaves. The name dandelion comes to English from the medieval Latin *dens leonis*, meaning

lion's tooth. Scientists recognize over 1200 subspecies of the common parking lot dandelion, which they know as *Taraxacum officinale*.

The word *Taraxacum* comes from the Greek words *taraxos* and *akos*, meaning, respectively disorder and remedy. Wild dandelions are considered medicinal plants as well as tonic spring salad greens and are used as a diuretic. The diuretic aspect gave wild dandies one of the more colorful names in culinary botany, *pissenlit* in French or *pissabed* in English.

I say that the dandelions for sale are not typically the same kind of plant as the weedy dandelion but in some places, like Italy, tender young *Taraxacum officinale* dandelions are still gathered for sale. There they are known as wild chicories, even when they're cultivated.

The plant usually sold as dandelion in the U.S. is related only distantly to the sidewalk dandelion, though both are members of the same plant family, the *Compositae*, along with lettuce, artichoke, sunflower, and thistle. The name for cultivated dandelions is *Chicoria intybus*, which makes it a loose leaved form of *radicchio*. Like *radicchio*, the supermarket dandelion show off a lovely sky blue flowers when it blooms, not a yellow flower like a *pissabed* dandy.

Radicchios are usually thought of here as the bitter, round, red, cabbage like vegetables that are chopped into spring mix salads, but there are many kinds of *radicchio* cultivated in Europe. Not all *radicchios* are red nor do they all form ball like heads. The chicories we call dandelions are more commonly known in Europe as *Catalogna* chicories, because they were developed in Catalonia.

Some Catalogna dandelions have red stems and others have green stems. The variety we're putting in your share box this week doesn't have the jagged leaves that originally suggested lion's teeth to the chefs; it's a smooth-leaved, tender variety from seed provided to me by the folks at A-16 restaurant up in San Francisco. A-16 takes its name from the Italian highway A-16 that crosses the southern Italian province of Campania. By bringing me seed for dandelion straight from Italy I guess you can say they really go the extra kilometer to make sure their chefs get the most authentic ingredients.

Catalogna dandelions share a mild bitter flavor with their radicchio cousins. When the plants are young and tender dandelions make wonderful salads. As dandelions mature and their foliage coarsens it's customary to blanch the leaves in boiling salted water, then drain and saute them. These dandelions are so tender that blanching is unnecessary. I have customers who tell me they juice dandelion greens but that sounds a little too healthy for me.

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All About Dandelions from Chef Andrew Cohen

Dandelion, or "tooth of the lion" (from the French dent de lion) is sure not to be a glamor item on everyone's table- it's too good for you, can be bitter, and can take a little work. Although it is said that the name derives from its tooth-like shape, I sometimes wonder if it derived from the bite of the bitterness these leaves can sometimes pack. Personally, I like that flavor, especially when tempered with the right things.

Typically, these "things" would be fats, acids, and sweetness.

If the greens have thick stems that seem to need trimming, I do this with a thin bladed knife that has a bit of flex, and is (of course) very sharp. Lay the leaf flat of the work surface and lay the blade parallel to the leaf and slide it from tip to base and shave the stem thin. Doing this on a raised surface makes it easier as you can have the handle off the work surface. (Note from Julia: yours won't need this from this week's box)

Here is a version of the classic bistro salad with "pissenlit" and "frissee" (probably where frizzy comes from...) Dandelions, Frissee, Lardons, and Croutons.

Clean and dry well equal amount of dandelion and frissee and tear up into bite-sized pieces. Make some garlicky croutons of good size (1/2") and cook up some thick bacon or pancetta to make cubes or strips 1/4" in size. Make a dressing with red wine vinegar (or a mix of R.W.V. and balsamic or white wine vinegar) and either a good olive oil or use a neutral oil mixed with walnut oil. Don't forget to rub the bowl with garlic before making the dressing. Toss all these together, season with fresh pepper and some large salt crystals and you are good to go. A poached egg on top is traditional, and the richness of the yolk is a welcome foil to the crunchiness and the sharpness of the flavors. A nice, sprightly version of this salad can be made when using the walnut oil dressing and using a berry vinegar instead of wine vinegar. A pinch of sugar will help out, and if you have some pickled onions, these would be great in there as well. If you are not a fan of poached eggs you could substitute some fresh goat cheese or ricotta smeared on the croutons.

The more traditional version of this salad omits the frisee, and makes a hot dressing using the bacon fat poured over, then the vinegar is drizzled over.

I have also seen a variant of this that looked good to me- it used wine-pickled herring and crumbled hard boiled egg along with the usual suspects. The dressing had some Dijon-style mustard in it as well. I could see omitting the bacon and letting the herring shine on it's own. This is a salad that would be very healthy for you based on dandelions reputed cleansing properties and herrings omega-3 richness.

As a side dish I serve the greens sauteed or braised, depending on tenderness of the leaves. To saute, get oil hot in a pan and toss in the washed and copped leaves. Wilt and add in a clove or two of minced garlic, and turn down the heat. Add a splash of liquid and top the pan and allow the garlic to soften. Season with S&P and serve. For the liquid, I tend to use sherry or a light red wine. I also like to drizzle a little vinegar over the greens at the end.

If the leaves are denser, I braise the dandelion. Chop some onion (this is an option) and saute in a little oil until soft and just coloring. Add the dandelion and cook to wilt. Add some minced garlic and cook to release the aroma and soften a little. Drizzle a pinch of sugar over all, toss and allow to cook a couple minutes (to caramelize the sugar), then add some stock or water (about a cup), put the top on and simmer until the greens are tender. Remove the top and cook off the liquid. Hit with a touch of vinegar before serving. A variation I liked was to use some apple juice with the stock, and use cider vinegar at the end. I sauteed some apple wedges in a little butter while the greens cooked and folded these into the

dandelions, then drizzled the cider vinegar over the dish. This went with some Norman style hard cider a friend had made, along with the cream sauced entree we had. The greens were a nice foil.

There is always my old standby for greens: the frittata. Saute the greens in a large pan. Add some garlic and minced onion and cook to soften. You could add some seeded and diced tomatoes if you wish. Season the lot well with S&P, add some herbs if you wish, then pour in 6 eggs that have been beaten well with 2T of water. Allow to start cooking, lifting the edges of the eggs and allowing the uncooked egg to run under the edge. Sprinkle with coarse grated cheese (or little bits in very small dice) such as mozzarella or something sharper. Not jack or cheddar.. Gruyere maybe. Put pan into pre-heated 400F oven and cook until eggs are just set (15 minutes, roughly thereabouts). Remove from oven and give pan a little shake to see if the frittata will slide loose. If not, use a thin bladed spatula to loosen and slide onto a large plate. Enjoy hot or at room temperature.

I have also seen tender dandelions in a strong broth with wisps of onion. I can see it with a sturdy pasta (think whole wheat) with onions, garlic, and some pancetta. These same ingredients, but sub out the pasta for a grain like spelt or wheat berries. If you don't do bacon, use some mushrooms, and maybe just a touch of smoked tofu. I think dandelion calls out for a touch of smokiness.

Recipes

Asian Broccoli

1 pound broccoli, chopped into 1 inch pieces, including stems and leaves
1 teas. minced garlic
1/3 c. chicken broth
2 tbl. soy sauce
1 teaspoon sesame oil

Heat a large frying pan until very hot. Add the oil and immediately add the garlic. Let sizzle for 15-20 seconds. Add the remaining ingredients and give everything a quick stir. Without turning the heat down, cover the pan and let steam for 3 minutes, or until the broccoli is done.

Sunday chili, adapted from the *Vegetarian Times*

The reasons I like this recipe: it's healthy, it's easy to make and easy to adapt to what I have on hand: any kind of bean, fresh or canned tomatoes, any allium: leeks, green garlic, 'regular' onions, etc, any kind of bell pepper (I personally don't care for green) or leave the pepper out, etc. you get the idea. AND it freezes well in smaller portions for when I'm having one of 'those' days. - julia

3 cups dry kidney beans (I used canned)
2-3 Walla Walla onion
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 colored bell pepper, chopped
1-2 cups coarsely chopped green cabbage
1/2 cup diced unpeeled potatoes
2 cups chopped tomatoes, or 10 oz. can tomatoes, with liquid
1 to 2 tbs chili powder (or mix this with fresh hot peppers, finely chopped)
1/2 tsp cumin
1/2 cup uncooked brown rice
5 cups water or vegetable broth (I used broth)
Salt and pepper to taste

Soak beans overnight in cold water to cover. Drain. Put beans in slow cooker. (Or skip all this and use canned if in a hurry) In a large skillet over medium-high heat, water saute onion and garlic until soft, about 3 to 5 min. (or oil saute them in a tablespoon cooking oil) add bell pepper, cabbage, potatoes,

tomatoes, chili powder, and cumin. Continue cooking, stirring frequently, for 3 min; transfer to slow cooker. Add rice and broth, cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. Season to taste. Serves 8

CABBAGE SALAD WITH PEANUTS,
Still Life with Menu Cookbook, Mollie Katzen

1/4 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup hot water
1/2 cup plus 1 TBS rice or cider vinegar
3 TBS brown sugar or honey
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 TBS soy sauce
1 tsp. sesame oil
7-8 cups shredded green cabbage
Crushed red pepper to taste
Garnishes: 1/2 cup peanuts, grated carrots and/or minced cilantro

In a large bowl, mash together the peanut butter and hot water until they form a uniform mix. Mix in vinegar, sugar or honey, salt, soy sauce, and sesame oil. Add the cabbage in 2 cup increments, mixing well after each addition. Add red pepper to taste. Cover the bowl tightly, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, visiting it every hour or 2 to give it a good stir. Sprinkle the peanuts on top right before serving. Serve with a slotted spoon. Serves 4-6

Warm Dandelion Greens Salad

3/4 pound dandelion leaves
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 Tablespoon red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
freshly ground pepper to taste
4 ounces smoked bacon
1 slice French or Italian bread, cubed
2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 hard boiled egg, crumbled

Wash the greens and tear into small pieces.

Put into a warmed salad bowl with the oil and vinegar. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss lightly. Fry bacon until half cooked. Add bread cubes and fry until cubes are golden and the bacon is completely cooked. Tip contents of the pan (fat and all if you want to be completely French about it) onto the greens. Toss quickly. Put the vinegar into the pan and heat rapidly. When it is bubbling fiercely, pour onto the greens and toss. Serve immediately with a sprinkling of the crumbled egg on top.
Serves two.

Dandelion Colombo, adapted from *Recipes from America's Small Farms*

6 cups dandelion leaves, roughly chopped
3 to 4 medium potatoes, or 1 medium head cauliflower, sliced
6 garlic cloves, chopped
2 small hot peppers, seeds and ribs removed, or 1/4 tsp. red pepper to taste
2 TBS peanut oil
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
1/2 cup silken tofu
1 1/2 TBS mellow (light colored) miso
2 TBS rum, wine, or sherry, or 1/4 tsp. rum extract (optional)
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. ground turmeric
1 tsp. dry mustard

Saute the dandelions, cauliflower or potatoes, garlic, and hot peppers in the peanut oil for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, puree the coconut milk, tofu 1/4 cup water, miso, rum if using, coriander, turmeric, and mustard in a blender. Mix puree into the sauteed ingredients, bring to a boil reduce the heat to low, cover and cook another 10 minutes, or until the potatoes or cauliflower are tender.

Pasta With Greens and Ricotta, *Moosewood*

Restaurant Cooks At Home

1 bunch dandelion greens chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
1 TBS olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
3/4 cup ricotta cheese
1 pound pasta (fettuccine, penne, shells)
grated Parmesan cheese
chopped fresh tomatoes
Toasted walnuts or pine nuts

Bring a large covered pot of water to a rapid boil. While the water heats, rinse the greens well, shake off any excess water, and chop coarsely. Saute the garlic in the oil for a minute, until soft and golden, taking care not to scorch it. Add the damp greens and saute, stirring often, until they are wilted but still bright green. Sprinkle with the salt, pepper, and nutmeg, and remove from the heat.

Optional: In a blender, puree the cooked greens with the ricotta until smooth and evenly colored. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Or, simply thoroughly mix together the ricotta with the greens and toss together with the cooked pasta.

When the water boils, stir in the pasta, cover and return to a boil. Then uncover the pot and cook the pasta until al dente. Drain the pasta and immediately toss it with the sauce in a warmed serving bowl. Top with Parmesan or crumbled ricotta salata, tomatoes and/or toasted walnuts or pine nuts.

Roasted Eggplant, from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters

Eggplant roasted in the oven requires little oil and therefore remains sweet and light-tasting. Take large globe eggplants (or any

eggplants provided they are fresh, glossy and firm), trim off the stems, and cut the eggplants in half lengthwise. Cut the halves into generous wedges, again lengthwise. Small eggplants should be cut only in half: if the eggplant pieces aren't thick enough, they will dry out before they cook through. Salt the wedges generously and let them stand a few minutes. Meanwhile preheat the oven to 400 F and oil a baking sheet or a shallow baking pan. Lay the wedges out flat on the pan. Oil the exposed side of the eggplant and bake for 20 to 35 minutes. The eggplant is done when the wedges are soft all over and brown on the underside. Remove them from the pan with a spatula. If the eggplants sticks to the pan, let it cool for a few minutes and it will be easier to detach. Serve the eggplant warm or cool, with an interesting vinaigrette.

Eggplant Parmesan, *Vegitarian Cooking for Everyone*, Deborah Madison

2 medium eggplant, about 1 1/2 pounds
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive Oil
1 1/2 to 2 cups Fresh Tomato Sauce
8 large basil leaves, torn into pieces
4 oz. Mozzarella, grated or thinly sliced
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly oil a 2 quart gratin dish. Slice the eggplant into rounds about 1/3 inch thick. Preheat the broiler. Brush both sides of each round with olive oil and broil 5 to 6 inches from the heat until browned. Broil the second side until browned, then remove and season lightly with salt and pepper. Don't worry if the eggplant has a dry appearance.

Warm the tomato sauce with half the basil. Spread about a third of the sauce over the bottom of the dish, then make an

overlapping layer of eggplant. Lay the mozzarella over the top, add the rest of the basil, and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Add the rest of the eggplant and cover it with the remaining sauce. Bake in the middle of the oven until bubbling and hot throughout, about 30 minutes

Eggplant Pulp Facts from *Recipes from America's Small Farms*. "No one ever said eggplant pulp was pretty, but it's a beautiful base for spreads and salads. To make it, just puncture a large eggplant in a few places and wrap it loosely in aluminum foil. Place it in a 400 degree oven until it's soft and mushy – it's usually ready in about an hour, but longer baking won't hurt it. Let it cool completely, then scrape all the flesh off the skin. You'll get about 1 1/2 cups of pulp from a medium eggplant. Add whatever other vegetables and herbs you like – the eggplant's mild taste and pleasant texture blends and binds other ingredients."

BABA GHANOUJ, *Bon Appétit*, Sept. 2002

2 pounds eggplants, halved lengthwise
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup tahini (sesame seed paste)*
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 garlic clove, chopped
Pita bread wedges

Preheat oven to 375°F. Generously oil rimmed baking sheet. Place eggplant halves, cut side down, on sheet. Roast until eggplant is very soft, about 45 minutes. Cool slightly. Using spoon, scoop out pulp from eggplant into strainer set over bowl. Let stand 30 minutes, allowing excess liquid to drain from eggplant.

Transfer eggplant pulp to processor. Add 1/4 cup oil, tahini, lemon juice, and garlic;

process until almost smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to small bowl. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Bring to room temperature before serving.) Serve with pita wedges. Makes about 1 3/4 cups.

Romesco Sauce -a recipe from Andrew Cohen

Romesco sauce is one of my favorite things to find in the refrigerator. I use it on fish, chicken, celery sticks, bread... I have thinned it out and put it on pasta even (hey, I was hungry and lazy.). The hardest thing about this recipe is roasting and peeling the peppers, and then frying the bread. You can toast it if you want, but the flavor is not quite the same. This recipe is for a smaller amount. After you make this once, you may want to double the recipe- same amount of work for twice the good stuff.

3/4 C olive oil

1 slice of good bread such as ciabatta, about 3/4" thick heaping 1/2 C of toasted almonds

1 large clove of garlic, minced

2-3 pimentos, roasted, peeled, and seeded (see the archives)

2-3 san marzano tomatoes, peeled if the skin is tough, seeded, and chopped S&P 1t paprika (if you have Spanish smoked paprika, or pimenton agrodulce-bittersweet paprika- this is the time to use it) red wine vinegar to taste

In a small frying pan, heat 1/8C oil over medium-high heat. When it is hot, but not smoking, fry the bread until golden, then turn and do the same for the other side.

Remove from the pan and drain on a paper towel. Tear up the bread into smallish bits and put into the bowl of a food processor.

Toss in the almonds and the garlic, and

process to break up into a coarse meal. Add the pimentos, tomatoes, some S&P, and the paprika. Process to a paste (it should still be chunky). With the motor running, drizzle in a couple T of the vinegar. Turn off the machine and taste for seasoning. Adjust if necessary.

With the motor running, stream in a 1/2 C of olive oil. Turn off and taste.

You may need to adjust with more vinegar and paprika (oil can turn down flavors, or damp them), or-if the sauce seems too sharp- you may want to stream in some more oil.

This keeps in the refrigerator for a week or so. I usually put it in old jam jars so I can take out less at a time so I don't worry about oxidation. It also keeps me from eating most of the batch at one time...

Curried Corn and Peppers, *Moosewood Restaurant Cooks At Home*

1 cup chopped scallions or onions

1 cubanelle pepper, diced

1 TBS butter

1tsp. Curry powder

2 cups fresh or frozen corn (10oz. box)

2 tomatoes, chopped

Salt and black pepper to taste

Saute the scallions and bell pepper in the butter on medium heat for about 2 minutes. Stir in the curry powder and the corn. Add the chopped tomatoes and continue to cook for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are thoroughly heated. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve as a filling for an omelet or burrito or as a side dish.

Stuffed Pimento Peppers, *Bon Appétit*, May 1999

1 1/2 pounds sweet Italian sausages, casings removed or use Tofurkey sausages for vegetarian dish

<http://www.twosmallfarms.com>

<http://www.mariquita.com>

1 1/2 cups coarsely grated zucchini (about 1 large)

<http://www.highgroundorganics.com>

1/2 cup finely chopped red onion

1/3 cup minced fresh parsley

1/4 cup fine dry breadcrumbs

1 large egg

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

3/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary

6 to 8 medium-size pimentos peppers, halved lengthwise, seeded

Fresh rosemary sprigs

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix first 9 ingredients in large bowl until well blended (could add parmesan if desired). Fill pepper halves with sausage mixture, dividing equally and mounding slightly. Arrange in 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover; chill.)

Bake peppers uncovered until tops are browned and thermometer inserted into filling registers 165°F., about 1 hour. Transfer peppers to platter. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and serve.

Two Small Farms Contact Information

Two Small Farms

Mariquita Farm/High Ground Organics

Organically Grown Vegetables

831-786-0625

P.O. Box 2065

Watsonville, CA 95077

csa@twosmallfarms.com

