

Two Small Farms Newsletter
Issue Number 285 - July 21st, 2004

In your box this week: Walla Walla Onions, Basil, Lemon Cucumbers, Salad Mix, Spinach, Summer Squash OR Beets, Broccoli OR Strawberries

What I would do with the box this week: by Jane Evans

Genovese basil is a classic pesto basil, so I might make pesto with it, as I never tire of pesto. You could, however, make pesto crackers using some of the ingredients of classic pesto, and spread them with goat or cream cheese topped with slices of lemon cucumber for an appetizer. You could, of course, use the cucumbers with the salad mix, but I like my green salads without "sinkers", so I would probably make a beet and cucumber salad by roasting, cooling, peeling and slicing the beets and mixing them with sliced onions and cucumber and a dill vinaigrette (preferably with fresh dill). You could also make a fresh orange vinaigrette (Valencias are in season now), but I would be more likely to make orange vinaigrette for a spinach salad using the beets, onions and slices of orange. For entrees, my current craving for comfort food would probably make me saute the onions until translucent and the broccoli until al dente and add them to macaroni and cheese. I would probably also make a savory galette using a cornmeal pastry dough (but you could also use a yeast bread dough from the refrigerated section of the market), spread with a melting cheese like teleme, fresh goat cheese or fresh mozzarella and topped with sauteed onions and wilted spinach and beet greens and baked at 450 degrees for about 12-15 minutes. I might season with cumin, but a lot of people don't care for it, so a mix

of oregano, rosemary and a touch of thyme would work. Salt and pepper any of the above to taste. Strawberries generally get eaten out of hand here, but, for company I might slice them, sprinkle Grand Marnier (or fresh orange juice) on them with some brown or raw sugar and, after letting them macerate for about 1/2 hour, serve them with a topping of creme fraiche, sour cream or yogurt.

PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS and colleagues and relatives about our CSA. We deliver to many communities around the Monterey Bay and over the hill from Los Gatos to San Francisco and many points between.

Delivery List

Initial veggie Notes

Storage: Everything in the fridge in a plastic bag EXCEPT the onions and basil. The onions are now mostly cured and can and should be stored in a cool dry, maybe even dark place, but not the fridge. The basil is full of controversy! A warmer spot in the fridge might work, but if it gets too cold the basil will darken. I find using it within 3 days or less is the best bet, remember you can whirl the leaves with a bit of oil and freeze this in a jar or ice cube trays....

To eat within 1-3 days: Broccoli, berries, basil....

The Walla Walla onions are a sweet onion along the lines of a maui or vidalia onion, and of course they can also be cooked.

Remembering Al Graham by Andy Griffin

I don't know about you but for me High School was like a cross between Waiting For Godot and The Lord Of The Flies. It isn't often I think back fondly about those years. While some people sentimentalize their high school experience my selective memory has probably darkened mine more than the strict facts would allow. Maybe

it's about time I thank my agriculture teacher from 1975, Mr. Al Graham.

I went to Carmel High. The faculty parking lot there looked like a used car lot and the student parking lot looked like a dealership's display room. It is safe to say few of my peers in my agriculture class actually ended up farming unless owning a winery counts. Some students took agriculture because the credits counted toward the biology requirements necessary for graduation and they hoped applied biology would be easier than real biology. Other students hoped to pick up a few gardening tips they could use in growing weed. I didn't know what I wanted, except that the girl who sat in front of me was cute.

Mr. Graham spent half the class time lecturing on the biological principles at work in an agricultural process and half the time was spent on projects designed to give life to our lessons. We made cream cheese. I still remember the astonishment I felt when I realized that everyday people could actually do something as strange as make cheese. And we grew gardens.

A substantial part of our final grade was based on our gardens. We were each assigned a plot of about 250 square feet right in the middle of campus. The garden plots backed up against the south facing wall of a row of classrooms which afforded some protection from the wind. The gardens faced out to the corridors that teemed with all of our peers during lunches, at recesses, and in between classes.

We were allowed to plant anything we wished. A lot of the girls planted flowers because flowers are pretty and develop nicely where conditions are cool. Some students planted strawberries because they taste good and would presumably do well in Carmel's coastal climate. Other kids planted radishes because they sprout readily and grow quickly. But I had a more cynical understanding of the task ahead of me.

What's the point of planting flowers, I reasoned, when all the hippie girls are just going to pick them to twine in their long, flowing locks?

What's the use of planting beets or radishes when the jocks are going to pull them up to throw at the nerds? And what chance does any strawberry have of ripening in the middle of 1000 teenagers? No, I decided, I will not grow anything attractive or tasty.

The day came for our gardens to be graded. We all tagged along as Mr. Graham went from plot to plot and inspected each student's work. My garden looked great.

Why have you chosen to plant garlic, kale, spinach, and potatoes, Andy? he asked me.

Well, for one thing, I answered, these crops are all well adapted to cool weather conditions we experience here at Carmel High. Each crop belongs to a different plant family, allowing for a reasonable crop rotation and some biological diversity. Then there is the question of pest control. The way I see it, the natural biggest threat my garden faces is vandalism and theft by other students. Everything in my garden either gives you bad breath or has to be cooked. Nothing I'm growing can really be used as a projectile except a potato and chances are nobody here even knows what the top of a potato plant looks like. My garden hasn't got anything worth stealing and it's too plain to make tearing it up much fun.

Mr. Graham turned to the class. The first rule of farming, he told the students gathered around him, is to know your market. If you don't sell your product you can't continue to produce. Since you are not selling your crops from these class gardens the only payment you can receive is a good grade. The second rule in farming is know your environment; the whole environment. Since Mr. Griffin has accurately assessed the pest populations in this educational environment his garden has survived, and even thrived. He gets an A. He has what it takes to make it in farming.

Mr. Graham made us all laugh. We learned some biology. He even taught me to believe in my instincts. Talk about waiting for Godot: it's taken me thirty years to get around to saying

this, but Thank you, Mr. Graham .

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Recipes from Julia

Do you still have rapini in your fridge? A quick way to cook it up tonight: wash and chop, cook in a small amount of oil with garlic and red pepper flakes. Eat as is or add this to a taco or cheese sandwich or?? More Rapini Recipes!: <http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/broccoli%20raab.html>

Potluck Fruit Crisp, recipe from Rebecca Ulrich

Fruit Crisp

4 cups sliced fruit (Peaches or apricots)
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp grated lemon zest
1 T. lemon juice
1/4 tsp almond extract

Arrange fruit in a buttered 2 qt. Casserole. Sprinkle with sugar, lemon and almond extract. Bake 20 minutes in 400 degree oven.

Mix together:
1.5 cups flour
1 T. baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 T. sugar

Cut in 1/3 cup vegetable shortening until it is a cornmeal texture.

Combine together:
1 egg
1/4 cup milk

Add to dry ingredients. Mix just until it is combined. Drop large spoonfuls of dough to cover fruit surface. Sprinkle with 2 T. sugar. Bake 20 minutes or until golden and firm.

NOTE: This recipe can be doubled using a

9x13 inch baking pan

Basil:

ROTI W/ BLACK BEANS AND BASIL
The Good Herb, Judith Benn Hurley

1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. olive oil
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, mashed through a press
1 medium tomato, medium-chopped
2 tsp. good-quality yellow curry powder
1 tsp. dried hot red pepper flakes, or to taste
1/4 cup dry sherry or mirin
2 1/4 cups cooked rice
1/2 cup cooked black beans, rinsed if canned
1/4 cup minced fresh basil (any type)
4 pitas (whole wheat are tasty)
2 tsp. Dijon mustard

Heat a large saute pan, then pour in 1 tbsp. of the oil. Add the onion, garlic, tomato, curry powder, and hot pepper and saute over medium-high heat until the onion is just wilted, about 3 minutes. Add the sherry, rice, and beans and continue to saute until the rice is warmed through, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the basil.

Spread each pita lightly with the mustard. Scoop equal portions of the rice mixture onto one-half of each pita. Fold each pita over into a half-moon shape.

Wipe out the saute pan and heat the remaining 1 tsp. oil until hot and fragrant. Set the roti in the pan and let them sizzle over medium-high heat until mottled brown, about 2-3 minutes on each side. Serve hot.
Makes 4 entree servings.

More basil recipes:
<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/basil.html>

In-a-Pinch Cucumber Salad
adapted from Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone

by Deborah Madison

1 long or two short Armenian cucumbers
salt and freshly milled white pepper
2 to 3 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
champagne vinegar or fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. fresh dill or parsley, chopped

Thinly slice cucumbers. Toss the cucumbers with a few pinches salt, pepper to taste, and enough oil to coat lightly. Add a few drops vinegar and the herb of your choice. Serves 4.

Onion Recipes:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/Onions.htm>

Spinach:

Spinach Salad from Chez Panisse Vegetables
by Alice Waters

Wash and spin dry tender young spinach leaves. Dress with a garlic and red wine vinaigrette or a Lemon Shallot Vinaigrette, and garnish generously with sieved hard-cooked egg and baguette croutons.

Lemon Shallot Vinaigrette

2 small shallots
2 Tablespoons Champagne vinegar
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Peel and dice the shallots very fine. Put them in a small bowl with the vinegar, lemon juice, and salt. Stir and let the mixture sit for 10 to 30 minutes. Whisk in the olive oil. Makes about 3/4 cup.

SESAME SPINACH WITH GINGER AND GARLIC Gourmet September 1997

1 garlic clove
2 teaspoons sesame seeds
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 teaspoon grated peeled fresh gingerroot

3/4 pound spinach, cleaned

Mince garlic and in a small dry skillet toast sesame seeds over moderate heat, stirring, until golden. In a heavy 6-quart kettle heat oil over moderate heat until hot but not smoking and cook garlic and gingerroot, stirring, 30 seconds, or until fragrant and golden. Add spinach by handfuls, stirring, and cook until just wilted.

Serve spinach sprinkled with sesame seeds.

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