

**Veggies this week:**

Lettuce  
Chives  
A Brassica  
Parsnips  
Spinach or Orach  
Turnips  
Mystery

**Initial Veggie Notes**  
from Julia

Storage: Remove greens from turnips and store separately. Put EVERYTHING in your box into the fridge as soon as possible, this truly helps shelf life . Don't worry if you

don't go home immediately, but don't leave your veggies in a heated car and don't leave them on the counter overnight.

To eat within 1-2 days: turnip greens, the broccoli or cauliflower (it will keep but it's so sweet and not cabbage-y when it's fresh, I encourage you to eat it up soon.) To eat within 1-3 or 4 days: the chives, spinach/orach, and lettuce (the lettuce might keep longer, but you'll have to start removing leaves after this in my experience). To eat within 7 or more days: the turnips (sans greens), the parsnips.

**What I would (and likely will) do with this week's box:**

Make a brown rice salad with some of the spinach, and the chives, and some or all of the turnip greens. Make a soup (we make lots of soup) with the turnips, their greens, and a couple of the parsnips. Make a broccoli salad, or steam it and serve as a simple side dish. Make a spinach or orach salad. Make an egg salad or deviled eggs with the chives.

More recipes are below....

**Dig In** by Andy Griffin

Digging parsnips is no picnic. Where carrots almost seem to shoulder each other out of the ground as they grow parsnips appears to pull themselves deep into the earth by their own taproots as they develop. The labor of lifting parsnips came as a surprise to me the first year I grew the crop. If instead of being a beefy, red-faced farmer I was an owl-eyed, pallid philologist bent over ancient texts perhaps I would not have been so ignorant. Parsnip in medieval latin is *pastinaca* and derives from the verb *pastinare*,

meaning to dig a trench. A tool common back then was a two-pronged digger called a *pastinaca*.

In the corrupted latin of the middle ages *pastinaca* evolved into the old French word *pasnaie*. French was the official language of the royal court in England for a while and *pasnaie* became *parsnip* to the Anglo saxon subjects. *Nip*, or *neep* was an old saxon word for root, as in turnip.

Today we dig the parsnips with the help of a tractor. We start by mowing off all of the parsnip foliage or chopping it back with machetes. Though the parsnip is a close relative of parsley, celery, carrots, cilantro, and fennel its leaves are not aromatic and benign. In fact, parsnip leaves are toxic and exude natural chemicals called *furocoumarins*. These toxins can provoke an irritating rash somewhat like poison oak if you get them on your skin or rub them in your eye. The roots don't carry the *furocoumarins* at all, but you will notice you never see bunched parsnips in the supermarket.

Once we mow back the parsnip foliage we attach a heavy duty steel shovel to the back of the tractor. The shovel blade is shaped like a stirrup and it is angled. As the tractor grinds forward the shovel bites into the earth and cuts the ground under the parsnips. The parsnip-laden soil is lifted and spills out the back. Workers follow behind kicking the parsnips from the dirt clods that encase them and then tossing the roots into sturdy plastic totes for the trip to the wash tank. I guess if I was naming parsnips today I'd call them White 6090 Mudders after the make and model of tractor we use to dig them.

Parsnips used to be much more popular than they are now. Before the introduction of potatoes and cane sugar the parsnip was one of Europe's staple starchy foods as well as being one of the sweetest foods available. Like the potato parsnips were fried, mashed, roasted, and souped up with butter and cream. Interestingly, beyond the latin-speaking pale of the Roman Empire where parsnips were dug from the earth with *pastinacas*, parsnips were dug with blunt tools called spuds. The philologist will remind you that spud is a cognate to our modern word spade. The potato is still a spud to some people. I suspect that before the potato displaced the parsnip as Europe's starch the parsnip was the real spud in our language just as it was on our dinner tables.

We shouldn't discriminate against the parsnip just because it is no longer as popular as it once was. The potato displaced the parsnip because it was easier to store, not because it tasted better. Today farmers who produce parsnips for the

wholesale market often coat the roots with a layer of wax so that they don't wilt. Your parsnips are coming to you fresh and nude of any waxes so keep them in their bags until you use them. Parsnips can keep for quite a while in the fridge if you can't use them promptly. Me, I can't wait to dig into the parsnips with a fork instead of a tractor.

Read more of Andy's writing at [www.ladybugletter.com](http://www.ladybugletter.com)

Photo Links are in the text version of the email letter.

## **Metro Farm**

The following is from [www.metrofarm.com](http://www.metrofarm.com). Andy will be a guest on their radio show this Sat. at 9am.

### *MOST CONTAMINATED FOODS*

Peaches 100; Strawberries 89; Apples 88; Spinach 85; Nectarines 85; Celery 83; Pears 80; Cherries 76; Potatoes 67; Sweet Bell Peppers 66; Raspberries 66; Grapes (imported) 64

### *LEAST CONTAMINATED*

Sweet Corn 1; Avocado 4; Pineapples 6; Cauliflower 10; Mango 12; Sweet Peas 13; Asparagus 16; Onions 17; Broccoli 18; Bananas 19; Kiwi 23; Papaya 23

## **Recipes** From Julia

Two Small Farms/Mariquita Farm Recipe Page:  
<http://www.mariquita.com/farm/recipe/links.html>

## **Turnip Tips**

adapted from *From Asparagus to Zucchini*

- \*Eat turnips raw. Slice or thickly julienne and add to vegetable platter or eat alone with or without dip.
- \*Grate raw into salads.
- \*Bake turnips alone for 30-45 minutes at 350 degrees, basted with oil, or bake along with other seasonal roots.
- \*Cook turnips with roasting meats.
- \*Mash or scallop turnips, just like you would potatoes.
- \*Dice turnips into soups or stews, and julienne into stir fries.

Turnip Recipes:

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

## **Julia's Parsnip Oven Fries**

Several Parsnips

Olive oil

salt and pepper

Peel and thinly slice parsnips, I think about the width of a slender fast food french fry. Mine are not nearly as uniform as restaurant fries, but it adds to the charm of this dish. Put parsnip strips in a mixing bowl and splash in some olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and mix to coat, I'm somewhat generous, but I end up using lots less than I would if I actually fried them. Spread the parsnips out on a large jelly roll baking pan. Bake at 450, mixing with a long wooden spoon every 10 minutes or so until browning and crispy. Warning: these are addictive. Our children even like them..

## **Orach!**

It's purple spinach, an antique, ancient, heirloom food. Here's what I did tonight with it for dinner: While I was helping our daughter Lena with her homework I pulled all the leaves off. This is also a task for a child, or while you're on the phone, or watching TV. Then right before dinner I gave it the Garlic Treatment: I sauteed chopped green garlic (do you still have some, now's the time to use it up!) for a minute or two on med. high heat in a little olive oil, then added the washed orach leaves. You could also add the turnip greens to this. Then I seasoned to taste with salt and pepper and it was delicious, really. You can also make a salad with the orach leaves, but we were already having a veggie/brown rice salad...

Spinach and Orach Adapted from *Cooks Illustrated*:

## **Sauteed Tender Greens**

Serves 4

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 medium cloves garlic or 2-3 stalks green garlic, minced  
2 pounds tender greens such as spinach, orach, and or turnip greens, cleaned and prepared  
Salt and ground black pepper  
Lemon wedges (optional)

Heat oil with garlic in large, nonreactive sauté pan or Dutch oven. When garlic sizzles and starts to turn golden, add wet greens. Cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until greens completely wilt, but are still bright green, about 5 minutes. Uncover, season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook over high heat until liquid evaporates, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Serve immediately, with lemon wedges if desired.

**Spinach Salad** from Chez Panisse Vegetables by Alice Waters  
[www.chezpanisse.com](http://www.chezpanisse.com)

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.

Salad Time!

#### Julia's Easy Blue Cheese Dressing

1/4 cup light sourcream  
1/4 cup mayo  
a couple of ounces crumbled blue cheese  
salt and lots of pepper  
a bit of finely chopped parsley and finely chopped red onion  
1 Tablespoon rice vinegar  
Mix all of the above ingredients, then thin with

buttermilk or milk.

#### Orange Balsamic Dressing

3/4 cup orange juice  
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar  
3 tablespoons grated orange peel (try to get ones that aren't waxed...)

1 to 2 teaspoons packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/2 cup olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
Place the orange juice, vinegar, peel and cumin in a blender. Blend for a few seconds. While the motor is running, slowly add the oil in a small stream until mixture is emulsified. Season to taste with salt and pepper.  
Makes about 1 1/2 cups dressing.

Cauliflower Recipes:

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

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