

Two Small Farms Newsletter
Issue Number 278 - May 26th, 2004

In your box this week:
Strawberries
Carrots
Red Radishes
Arugula
Salad
Orach
Mint
Beets
Fennel

Initial Veggie Notes from Julia

Storage: Everything in your box this week should be stored in the fridge. It will all keep better if kept colder. Separate the greens from the roots on the carrots, radishes and beets. The beet and radish greens are great cooking greens: tasty and healthy. Cook them first, as they wilt

quickly.

To eat within 1-3 days: berries, radish and beet greens, orach

GREENS MANAGEMENT

This week's box is heavy on cooking and salad greens: radish and beet greens for cooking, arugula and orach for cooking or salad, and then the lettuce salad mix. My advice is to make your salad and cooking greens plans, to make sure these yummy items aren't in your fridge next week when you pick up your next box. A side dish at dinner is great. AND you can also cook up some greens with garlic or onions and put them in a quesadilla for breakfast or lunch, wash up some arugula and toss it with the baby salad mix for taking your lunch to work, and prepare the orach for salad or cooking the way you would fava beans: while watching tv, on the phone, make the kids/guests do it, etc. IF you have any heads of lettuce in your fridge from weeks past, remove them now, remove the older, outer leaves, and wash & cut up the still-good inner leaves in this week's salad program.

What I would (and likely will) do with this week's box: Cook the arugula with some of last week's garlic and toss it with 1-2 tablespoons roasted pinenuts or almonds and toss all that with hot pasta and some minced mint. Yummmmm. Use my mandoline julienne carrots for all the salads I'll make. I also like to mandoline carrots for soups. I cook the chard and add a bit of cream cheese just before removing from the heat. It reminds me of creamed spinach but is a much lighter dish. I'll make fresh mint tea! See photo link below. I like to eat fennel like others eat celery sticks. If your family isn't a big raw fennel family, try

cooking it chopped along with onions when beginning a soup or stir fry or tomato sauce.

To make with last week's box: I just made a pasta salad. I used some small penne (already cooked and cooled, of course), and added julienned carrots, they can be grated instead, some very lightly steamed and small chop-cauliflower, chopped purplette onions. You can add a bit of crumbled feta or blue cheese, or grated parmesan. You can add shredded cooked chicken to make it more of a meal, or chopped, toasted almonds/pine nuts if you want to stay vegetarian. I dress the salad with some of the salad dressing that is the first in the recipe section below. Voila! Part dinner is done, and it will be so delicious to have a homemade lunch tomorrow.

More recipes are below....

Demolition and Renewal by Jeanne Byrne

Last month we hired a demolition company to come in and remove several large concrete slabs from our farm, opening up another couple acres on which to grow vegetables. One foundation had been under the old hay barn that we tore down with some regret after we moved here - it had character, but was damaged beyond cost-effective repair. The demo company also removed the last of the wood debris from that barn. The other concrete was on the southeastern edge of the property and included some very large thick round slabs. They may have supported silos perhaps, along with dairy-related buildings from our farm's past life. The buildings had fallen down before we bought the place, but there was still quite a bit of debris among the weeds. All in all, they took away more than 60 semi dump truck loads of concrete, plus a bunch of wood debris. Now we're \$20K poorer, but we're 2 acres richer and also have a nice open field near the house and packing shed.

It feels good. The demolition company recycles all the concrete, and the wood will be chipped and used in a cogeneration facility. It is nice to un-pave the land and let it come to life again. It reminds me of my undergraduate days, when our environmental studies department reclaimed a parking lot and converted it into an urban garden.

The land made available by the clean-up will be helpful for us. The soil is sandier than other areas of our farm, providing better drainage. This means it will dry out earlier in the year so we can get in and plant those early spring crops for the CSA. After we

harvest the potato crop we have on the adjoining ground this summer, we'll level the newly cleared area, apply gypsum to add calcium and sulphur to the soil, and plant a cover crop to build up the organic matter. Then we can start to incorporate our "new" land into our farm.

Jeanne's photo link of the demolition:
<http://www.highgroundorganics.com/photolink9.html>

Two Small Farms Dinner at Stokes Restaurant in Monterey. Thursday, June 10th, 6:30pm, \$85 includes wine but not tax or tip. The winemaker from Fiddlehead cellars will be there, and at least 2 of the 5 of us will also be there. Stokes Restaurant:
831.373.1110 www.stokesrestaurant.com

Disclaimer: We know that these higher end meals are not for everyone, the Stokes folks are putting this dinner together. We are hosting at least one potluck and several pickup days this season... - andy, julia, jeanne, steve, & katie.

Recipes from Julia

Julia's Everyday Salad Dressing

into a mini blender jar (or small canning jar, they work with most American blenders), put in equal parts vinegar (balsamic or rice) or lemon juice, and olive oil. With S & P you've got dressing. What I like to add to this dressing: 1 roughly minced, peeled garlic clove, a small dollop of fancy mustard, and a small dollop of jam. Screw blender bottom onto the jar, then insert into the blender and whirl. You've got dressing! The variations are endless...

Fennel and Cheese for Dessert

adapted from The Victory Garden Cookbook by M. Morash

Fennel bulbs
One great cheese, such as blue cheese or a local goat cheese
best olive oil
S & P

Wash and trim fennel bulbs. If small, cut in half; quarter larger ones. Serve with slices of cheese and pass the oil, salt, and pepper

FENNEL STUFFED WITH CREAM CHEESE AND KALAMATA OLIVES

1 large fennel bulb (about 1 pound)

a 3-ounce package cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup drained Kalamata olives, pitted and chopped

Trim fennel stalks flush with bulb, reserving fronds, and cut outer 2 layers loose at base, removing them carefully and reserving rest of bulb for another use. Chop reserved fronds. In a small bowl cream together cream cheese, olives, and chopped fronds. Spread inside of larger fennel layer with cream cheese mixture and press back of other layer onto filling firmly. Chill fennel, wrapped tightly in plastic wrap, at least 1 hour or up to overnight. Unwrap fennel and cut crosswise into 1/3-inch-thick slices. Cut slices crosswise into 1 1/2-inch-wide sections.

Fresh Fennel Confit from The New Basics by Rosso & Lukins

1 fennel bulb
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon Pernod liqueur

1. Trim fennel bulb, and cut into long julienne strips.
2. Combine the oil and butter in a heavy saucepan over very low heat. Add the fennel and pepper, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes.
3. Remove the cover, add the Pernod, and stir. Cook an additional 5 minutes.

I made this confit without the Pernod and added some sliced onion with the fennel. It was great topped on a pizza, or can be served as a side dish.

CREAMY FENNEL SOUP from:

<http://www.recipeland.com>

2 cups stock (chicken, beef, vegetable...)
1 full sized Fennel bulb, about 1 pound
1 Sliver garlic
2 Tablespoons chopped onions
1 Tablespoons lemon juice (or more to-taste)
1 teaspoon lemon zest, chopped

1/2 teaspoon dried dillweed (or 1 1/2 -t fresh)
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 quart nonfat yogurt

Clean and slice the fennel bulb, reserving any greens for garnish. Cook the fennel in the stock with the garlic and shallots until soft. Puree in a blender with the lemon juice and zest, and the spices. Strain the

puree if you wish a smoother texture. Combine well with the yogurt and chill. Serve garnished with chopped fennel greens or chopped cilantro.

Mint!

Lettuce, Arugula, and Mint Salad

2 1/2 tablespoons Sherry vinegar or white-wine vinegar
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1/3 cup olive oil
about 10 cups salad greens
1 large bunch arugula, coarse stems discarded and the leaves rinsed and spun dry
1 bunch worth of mint leaves, rinsed and spun dry

In a bowl whisk together the vinegar, the mustard, and salt and pepper to taste, add the oil in a stream, whisking, and whisk the dressing until it is emulsified. In a large bowl toss the greens with the dressing.

Serves 6-8.

Mint Tisane, otherwise known as the delicious and cheap-if-it-is-in-your-garden **Fresh Mint Tea**:

Clean several sprigs of mint. Put into a teapot or a large glass measuring cup. Pour just-boiled water over mint, let steep 3 or so minutes, drain through small tea strainer. Drink hot or chill first. Options: you can add honey or sugar if you want a sweeter taste. You can also mix this 1/2 and 1/2 with lemonade. Fresh mint tea tastes different than tea made with dry mint leaves.

Arugula:

Spring Radish Salad

adapted from Verdura Vegetables Italian Style by Viana La Place

1 bunch fresh radishes
2-3 very sweet carrots
2 bunches arugula
salt and pepper to taste
E.V. olive oil
2 Tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Lemon wedges

Trim the radishes and slice them thinly. Peel the carrots and cut them on the diagonal into very thin

slices. Snap off the tough stems from the arugula. Gather the arugula into a bunch and cut it crosswise into strips.

Arrange the arugula on a platter. Scatter the sliced radishes and carrots over the arugula. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle with enough olive oil to lightly moisten the vegetables. Sprinkle the Parmesan over the top. Serve with lemon wedges to squeeze over the salad.

ARUGULA PESTO SAUCE

eat with noodles, toast, carrot sticks...add to salad dressing...

3 cups packed arugula (about 3/4 pound), washed well and spun dry
1/3 cup pine nuts, toasted golden and cooled
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large garlic clove, chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 cup hot water plus additional if desired
In a food processor pulse together all ingredients except oil and water until arugula is chopped fine. With motor running add oil in a stream, blending mixture until smooth. Sauce may be made up to this point 1 week ahead and chilled, its surface covered with plastic wrap. Bring sauce to room temperature to continue. Stir in 1/4 cup hot water plus additional for thinner consistency if desired.

Arugula/lemon salad

Make a dressing of juice of 2-3 large lemons, salt and pepper, 1 clove smashed garlic, and some of the lemon peel, zested into the dressing. Add about 1/3 cup of olive oil (there is organic olive oil at the farmers market every week now....)Whisk everything together. (Add a pinch of red pepper if you want to add some more heat.)

Toss dressing with 2 large bunches washed and torn arugula.

HOT WILTED ARUGULA

adapted from More Recipes from a Kitchen Garden, Shepherd & Raboff

1 thick slice smoky bacon or pancetta

1/2 tbsp. olive oil
1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
2 small red onions, thinly sliced
3 tbsp. chicken stock
2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 bunch arugula, tough stems removed
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Garnish:

1/4 cup toasted pine nuts or walnuts

In a large deep skillet or wok over medium heat, cook bacon or pancetta until crispy. Remove and drain on paper towels. Slice or break into bits and reserve. Add olive oil to bacon drippings in skillet, heat and add garlic and onions. Saute slowly for 3 to 4 minutes, until softened. Stir in chicken stock and vinegar. Add greens and mix. Stir fry for 2 to 3 minutes, until leaves are coated. Cover and cook several minutes more, until leaves are wilted and cooked tender-crisp. Top with reserved crisp bacon bits and chopped nuts. Serve hot. Serves 4.

Beets:

Simple summer beet soup

Boil and peel beets. (can use both kinds). Whirl in food processor with orange or lemon juice, small amount of fresh mint leaves if you have some, and black pepper. Chill. Serve with plain yogurt or sourcream.

Boiled Beets and Wilted Beet Greens with Garlic and Lemon

from Pasta e Verdura by Jack Bishop

Best pasta choice: fusilli or other short, curly shape

This sauce utilizes both the beets and their leafy tops, so freshness is paramount. Boiled and diced beets are added to a simple sauce of tender beet greens wilted in garlic and olive oil. A splash of lemon juice helps balance the sweetness in the beets, as does the gentle bitterness of the greens themselves.

4 medium beets with their leafy greens
salt to taste, plus 1 teaspoon
1/4 cup olive oil
4 medium cloves garlic
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 pound pasta

1. Bring 4 quarts of salted water to a boil in a large pot for cooking the pasta.

2. Slice the beet stems where the leaves begin and set the leaves aside. Trim all but the last inch of the stems from the beets themselves. Trim any dangling roots and wash the beets to remove any dirt. The trimmed beets should weigh about 1 pound. (Julia's note: if you have a beet or 2 left over, they are good grated raw into a salad.)

3. Place the beets in a medium saucepan and cover with water. Bring the water to a boil and add salt to taste. Simmer until the beets are tender enough so that a metal skewer slides easily through them, about 25 minutes. Drain the beets and cool them slightly. Use paper towels to hold the beets and rub gently to slip off their skins. Trim and discard the remaining portion of the stem. Cut the peeled beets into 1/4 inch cubes and set them aside.

4. While the beets are cooking, place the beet greens in a large bowl and soak in several changes of cold water until no grit appears on the bottom of the bowl. Shake the leaves to remove excess moisture but do not dry them. Slice the damp leaves crosswise into 1/2 inch wide strips and set them aside. There should be about 5 cups of shredded beet greens. (Julia's note about the several changes of cold water: I just wash the beets, but then I'm not a fussy chef from New York City....)

5. Heat the oil in a large sauté pan with a cover. Add the garlic and sauté over medium heat until golden, about 2 minutes. Add the beet greens and 1 teaspoon salt. Stir several times to coat the leaves with the oil. Cover and cook, stirring several more times, until the beet greens have wilted, about 5 minutes.

6. Stir in the cubed beets and the lemon juice and cook until heated through, about 1 minute. Taste for salt and adjust seasonings if necessary.

7. While preparing the sauce, cook and drain the pasta. Toss the hot pasta with the beet sauce. Mix well and transfer portions to warm pasta bowls. Serve immediately.

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