

Table of Contents:

- 1) In your box this week
 - 2) Celery
 - 3) Tomato Upick is postponed to August 26th due to the cooler weather
 - 4) Tell your friends: flyer now posted on our website to print
 - 5) Photos and What to eat first
 - 6) Recipes
 - 7) Veggie Notes
 - 8) Unsubscribe
 - 9) Two Small Farms Contact Information
-
-

1) In your box this week: Celery, Strawberries, Basil, Tomatoes, Fresh Beans, 2 mysteries, Summer Squash -or- Cucumbers...

This week's vegetable list: I try to have it updated by Monday night, sometimes by Mon. am:
<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/CSAinfo/thisweekslist.html>

** note on the CSA boxes: please take care to keep them intact and try not to tear the tabs, it helps us keep costs down and we can use the boxes once the (box tops) are torn... thanks!

Keep everything BUT the tomatoes in the fridge: tomatoes get mushy and don't need to be refrigerated. If they get nicked/cut eat them up within a day.

2) Celery: a note from Andy

Celery is not a plant that many home gardeners grow because it has some cultural requirements that are difficult to fulfill. To be pleasantly crunchy yet not too fibrous celery needs to grow quickly, and rapid growth calls for very rich soil and plenty of water. A lot of home gardeners are not willing to accept just how thirsty celery is, and their crop ends up being tough and stringy from stress.

It helps when growing garden vegetables to think about where in nature the vegetable first evolved because that information will give you the clues you need to duplicate the environment in which the plant feels most at home. Celery evolved as a marsh plant, and even thrives in the brackish water along tidal rivers. When you bite into a stick of celery and taste a natural saltiness you're tasting the celery plant's appetite for minerals and tolerance of salty water. A marsh where a river meets the ocean is going to be an environment where the water is naturally charged with

as many nutrients as possible, so it's not hard to understand how celery developed its taste for rich food. A plant growing in a tidal area had better get used to having wet feet now and then, so it's no surprise that celery likes constantly moist soil.

I learned all this from a funny experience before I ever read it in a book. I'd gone down to Big Sur to relax on the beach and I'd found a tiny secluded spot at the foot of a huge cliff. There was a drippy, drooly sort of a waterfall coming down a crack in the rocks that was covered in mosses and ferns, and just behind a low dune at the back of the beach there was a tiny pool no bigger than a bathtub with dragonflies. When my book got boring I went to poke around in the pool. Growing there was a plant that looked a lot like celery, so I broke a stem off and smelled it. It had a strong celery aroma, so I tasted it. It looked like celery, smelled like celery, and tasted like celery, but how could it be celery, growing in such an obscure place. I thought to take a sample home to my father, Dr. James Griffin, who was a professor of plant ecology and an authority on California native plants.

My father was ensconced in his office when I got home, surrounded, as usual, with bales of topographic maps. He listened as I described the locale I'd found the plant (yes, it was *Apium graveolens*, or celery) and he located the site on his map. Then he pulled out one of his official U.S. Dept. Of Agriculture maps of the Los Padres National Forest and opened it. This map had no topographical lines to indicate elevation but it did have all the mining claims, homestead claims, and Spanish land grants noted. His finger traced the little creek I'd sat next to back from the coast to a point where it crossed a homestead claim a mile up the hill, now abandoned and reclaimed within the National Forest. Mystery solved. Obviously, at some point someone had tried to make a go of farming on the edge of the wilderness. They must have had a little garden and planted some celery, which went to seed, and some of the seeds washed down the creek to the edge of the sea. The cliffs had protected the garden escapee from deer and rabbits and the plants had managed to propagate themselves.

As so often happens with cultivated plants that go feral, my celery specimen had reverted to the wild weedy type that would be found growing across the temperate zones of Europe and Asia. It doesn't take many generations of freedom for cultivated plants to lose whatever patina of civilization that we've bred into them. Conversely, when plants are developed by scientists in a laboratory environment where they're fed a lot of chemical fertilizers and coddled with pesticides it doesn't take them long to lose some of their natural strength and vitality, which is why some organic growers prefer heirloom varieties. One happy consequence of the increasing market appeal of organic produce is that some breeders are beginning to grow seed crops organically, and develop crops that will thrive under an organic regimen. Enjoy Stephen's celery this week!

3) The First Tomato Upick is now scheduled for Saturday, August 26th, a week from this Saturday: at Mariquita Farm from 9am to 3pm. Come earlier for cooler picking conditions.

4) Tell Your Friends:

Andy and I met several CSA folks at the farm dinner in San Francisco at Jack Falstaff, what fun! Colleen V. From Sunnyvale told me all the reasons she liked being part of the CSA, so I thought I'd put it here, in case you're trying to get neighbors/friends to be part of a CSA here or elsewhere, Colleen said it so well:

Our family has benefitted on many levels by subscribing to Two Small Farms CSA service, which we began 4 years ago. Prior to our starting this service, we tried to eat balanced meals and cook most of them at home, and we did a reasonable job. I'd say we were more successful at eating home-cooked, nutritious food on a regular basis than most American families. After we started receiving Two Small Farms weekly produce, we realized how much room there was for improvement in our food lives.

Here are some tangible benefits:

- 1) Our pickup site is closer than the nearest store. I don't have to spend time selecting our vegetables. I don't have to wait in line to buy them.
- 2) Our refrigerator is always stocked with fresh food.
- 3) I don't have to do any significant meal planning . The recipes in the newsletter are delicious and make it easy to "plan." By now, I don't even use recipes anymore....I've learned our favorite ones by heart.
- 4) I go to the grocery store far less often than I used to . I can get away with going once a week or every 10 days, simply to get staples and meat (which I freeze), so I always have long shelf-life (or freezer-life) food items on hand to go with the fresh veggies or to prepare a vegetable dish. I am saving time, and I am sure I am saving a bit of gas money as well, by not shopping as often.
- 5) I have lost weight and maintained my lower weight. Everyone in my family of 5 is within a good weight range for their age. This is because we fill up on nutritious food and still have our desserts every night, but we don't overeat unhealthy foods.
- 6) We spend less money on food than we used to. We buy far less processed and pre-packaged foods now, and we eat out less often because we don't want to waste the vegetables on hand. We also eat less meat now.
- 7) We find that our meals seem gourmet. They are so delicious and fresh. Every dinner is a treat. Even if we buy wholesome and delicious packaged foods such as those available at Whole Foods Market or Trader Joe's, we are less satisfied (based on price and taste) than we are when we prepare our own meals.
- 8) Our children eat their dinners without fussing. They've grown used to our food style. They still express their preferences, but they eat crazy things like leek tart, chard burritos (recipe from Julia), sauteed cabbage (otherwise known as "Andy's Favorite Cabbage," carrot gratin with brown rice, and other unconventional foods for children. When they go out to others' houses, they don't complain, balk, or embarrass me. They are often willing to try new foods.

Here are some intangible benefits, and direct benefits not to us, but to others:

- 1) We are happy to support local farmers and their families.
- 2) We are happy to buy food that has not traveled very far; the environmental benefit is

meaningful to us.

3) We are happy to buy and eat organic food, because of both the health and environment benefits.

4) I spend more time washing and chopping food than I would if I bought it pre-packaged, but I spend less time planning and shopping. The trade-off turns out to be an even trade on time, I would say, after 4 years of experience with our subscription. Our subscribing to the CSA is justified, based on the benefits above.

5) Our friends have been exposed to our food and the service, and some have tried it. They enjoy it.

6) During weeks when we are going out of town or have too much food (we also have a home garden), we give the excess produce to the local soup kitchen or to a friend or neighbor.

7) We find the newsletter articles by the farmers to be educational and interesting. Some articles have even helped our own gardening practices.

All in all, the experience has been very good for us. We plan to continue with it, and we hope to see a rise in awareness of and participation in the organic food movement and sustainable farming.

-Colleen Vandevoorde, Sunnyvale/Mountain View site

Thanks to Colleen for this!

We now have a .pdf flyer posted on our website so any of you that have a place to post a flyer about our CSA program can print one or two or more and post them. Word of Mouth is our best mode of getting the word out: Thanks for your help! Our summer produce is now officially here.

<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/fliers/tellyourfriends.html>

5) Photos & What to eat first and what can keep

Basil:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/basilgeno.jpg>

Yellow Wax Beans: (you may get these, or green beans, or romano beans: they can/should be treated like green beans: in the fridge and then cooked up like any green bean would!)

http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/beans_yellowwax.jpg

Photo Gallery:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/index.html>

Everything but tomatoes and basil should be kept in the fridge. Eat the berries in the first 1-2 days. Basil storage? So many theories, it depends on YOUR fridge: if the basil gets too cold it will turn black in minutes. You can try the door of the fridge, but the best bet is to use it up. If you want to nurse it along to have it for salads for days try treating like a bouquet of flowers, but change the water every day.

6) Recipes from Julia

GREEK SALAD SANDWICH Bon Appetit May 1995

12 ounces small tomatoes, cored, halved, thinly sliced
6 cups spinach leaves, stems trimmed
1 1/2 cups thinly sliced cucumber
1 cup crumbled feta cheese (about 4 ounces)
1/3 cup coarsely chopped pitted black brine-cured olives (such as Kalamata)
16 large fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
1/4 cup olive oil
5 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 large garlic clove, minced
4 5- to 6-inch-diameter pita bread rounds, toasted

Place tomato slices in strainer; drain 15 minutes. Combine tomatoes, spinach, cucumber, feta cheese, olives and basil in large bowl.

Whisk 1/4 cup olive oil, 5 teaspoons lemon juice and minced garlic in small bowl to blend. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper. Pour dressing over salad and toss to coat.

Cut pita bread rounds in half crosswise. Divide salad mixture among 8 pita halves and serve.

A Simple TOMATO AND BASIL SAUCE

The Top 100 Italian Dishes, Diane Seed

1 tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 lbs. tomatoes, peeled
8 basil leaves

Heat the oil and gently fry the onion and garlic until they are transparent. Add the tomatoes and cook quickly in a shallow uncovered pan so that the sauce thickens and remains a bright red. Season to taste then puree with the basil leaves.

Caprese Salad Serves: 6

Several ripe tomatoes, (about a pound or a little less) cut into slices (fancier presentation) or quarters (for smaller tomatoes, for a simpler more 'homey' presentation)
6 oz. FRESH mozzarella cheese, cut into thinnish slices (for the

tomato slices) or cubed (for the quartered tomatoes)
3 Tbsps. extra virgin olive oil
12 medium fresh basil leaves, whole for version one, or shredded for version 2
1 clove garlic, minced (optional, only for version 2!))
1/8 tsp. salt (optional)
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper

Instructions:

Version 1: Arrange the tomato, cheese and whole basil leaves laying on top of each other. I used "google images" to find a nice photo since I don't have my own. You can try that if you're trying to imagine how to present this salad. Sprinkle with a bit of S & P. Gorgeous, delicious, healthy, easy. One of the perfect dishes for home meals and parties.

Version 2: Combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss. Serve with fresh bread.

[Celery Recipes!](#) I'm forever telling folks they can use fennel where one would use celery, so flip it! You can use the celery in most fennel recipes! If your celery isn't going to be eaten up as a snack or smeared with peanut butter try chopping it and sauteing with onions at the bottom of your next soup/stew/stir fry etc. -Julia

[here's one recipe from our friend Bruce Cole: the new publisher of Edible Bay Area! \(That's what it will be called soon, I think.\)](#)

Can't wait to get my hands on your lovely celery - it is my very favorite vegetable!

Raw, thinly sliced, tossed with a bit of meyer lemon juice, a drizzle of olive oil, some smashed tuscan olives, shavings of parmesan, lots of black pepper, and a shower of salt.

<http://www.ediblesanfrancisco.net/>

Andy bought me a copy of Venus in the Kitchen for Valentine's Day a few years ago: it's an older cookbook with funny text. Here's two recipes for celery:

Celery Recipes from Venus in the Kitchen

Celery Cream p. 5

Peel the celery, cut in small pieces, scald it, and drain in a colander. Now put it in a saucepan over the fire with a piece of butter; sprinkle it with a pinch of flour; moisten it with some good thickened stock; bind it with the yolks of eggs mixed with cream, flavour it with a little nutmeg, and serve hot.

Puree of Celery pg. 13

Take a bunch of celery and wash it well; cut it in pieces and place it in a saucepan with water and little salt. Boil thoroughly, drain, and put in cold water.

In another saucepan melt over the fire an ounce of butter, one ounce of flour, salt, pepper, and a pinch of grated nutmeg; mix all together, adding the celery, a quart of broth, and the same amount of cream. Put it on the fire, taking care to stir until it boils, press through a sieve, and again put it on the fire for a moment.

Rather banal, I venture to think.

Sweet and Sour Celery

from Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce by the Madison Area CSA Coalition

1 bunch celery, leaves removed, stalks cut on the diagonal into 1-inch slices

1 Tbs. sugar

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper

1/4 cup cider vinegar

1 tbs. finely chopped sweet red pepper

Pour enough water into a large skillet to fill about 1/4-inch deep. Add celery, sugar, salt and cayenne pepper. Cover, leaving the lid slightly ajar, and bring to boil. Cook until celery is tender and liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in the vinegar. Transfer to a serving dish and scatter sweet pepper over the top. Serve immediately. Four servings.

Celery Stew

from the Victory Garden Cookbook by Marian Morash

A quickly made stew with good, fresh vegetable flavor.

4 cups celery in 1/2-inch chunks

1 sweet red pepper

1 1/2 cups sliced onions

3 Tbs. butter

1 Tbs. olive oil

1 clove garlic

1/2 tsp. celery salt

4 tomatoes

1 tsp. chervil

1/2 cup chopped celery or lovage leaves or dill

1/2 cup hot broth

2 cups cooked white kidney or shell beans

salt and freshly ground pepper

Blanch celery for 5 minutes in boiling water; drain. Peel pepper if you wish. Slice pepper and cook along with onions in butter and oil until wilted and lightly browned. Chop garlic, add to pan, and cook for 1 minute. Stir in celery and celery salt; cover and cook over medium-low heat for 20 minutes stirring occasionally. Peel, seed, and chop tomatoes and add along with herbs and broth. Cover pan and cook for 10-15 minutes longer or until celery is tender. Stir in beans and cook until heated through. Season to taste and serve hot. Serves 6-8.

Celery is very low in calories, and makes a great snack. Just chewing celery burns nearly as many calories as the celery contains. Even though celery's calorie content may be low, it provides about 12% of the RDA of Vitamin C for both men and women and 14-16% of the RDA for Folic acid.

Celery Recipes:

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

Strawberries:

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

Cucumber recipes:

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

Tomato Recipes:

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

Summer Squash:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/summer%20squash.html>

recipe index:

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

7) Veggie Notes

From High Ground: Flowers, Celery, Beans, Berries, a mystery
From Mariquita: Tomatoes, Mystery, Summer Squash/cukes, Basil

Two Small Farms
Mariquita Farm/High Ground Organic
831-786-0625
P.O. Box 2065
Watsonville, CA 95077
csa@twosmallfarms.com
<http://www.twosmallfarms.com>

