



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

Week 1

June 1, 2010

Farmer's Notebook

Hello Foxtail Farm members! After a long winter and finicky spring, we are gratified to begin another CSA season of growing and eating.

There are many reasons to join a CSA. But as we begin the season, it's difficult to think about much besides the return of fresh, delicious food to our tables. We finished our last batches of frozen peppers and peas at least a month back, and the sight (not to mention the smell, texture and taste) of something tender and green on the table is nothing short of glorious.

Eating with the seasons is an integral part of belonging to a CSA. The volume and variety of produce may be more than you are used to. For many families, it means a significant change in the way you cook and eat.

As we embark on the season, we offer a few challenges to our members (and ourselves!):

- ◆ **Eat more vegetables!** Getting your five-or-more-a-day can take a little effort. Feature them, snack on them, mix them in, put them on the side, hide them, cook them, eat them raw. Just eat them.
- ◆ **Try something new.** Never eaten fava beans or collard greens before? Now is your chance.
- ◆ **Try something old, again.** Ok, you think you don't like beets. In fact, you hate them. Try them anyway. It's said that kids may need to try something many times before they develop a taste for it. We think that's true for grownups, too.
- ◆ **Stay in season.** It's not easy to wait until August for tomatoes. But the reality is, that is when they come into season in this region. Enjoy what's fresh and local while it's here.
- ◆ **Use your whole share every week.** And while you're at it, keep a mini-journal for our newsletter. We would love to hear from you about "a week in the life" of a CSA share.
- ◆ **Save the harvest.** We get a little better at this each year, but it's never enough. Freeze, can, dry, pickle...you will be so glad in February that you took the time to do this.

This Week's Harvest

Arugula - known as "rocket salad" in Britain, this mildly peppery green can be eaten raw or cooked in pasta, soups and other dishes. Store loosely wrapped in damp paper towels in a plastic bag in the fridge crisper. Trim away stems. Little holes are from arugula-loving beetles and do not affect taste or nutritional quality. *See this week's recipe.*

Bok Choy - both the crunchy white stems and crisp dark green leaves of this brassica are edible. Also called pac choi or Chinese cabbage, bok choy is excellent in stir fries, in soups, or sautéed with olive oil and garlic. Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the fridge crisper drawer. Rinse well before chopping. *See this week's recipe.*

Broccoli Raab - a relative of broccoli with a zesty bite. Highly perishable. Store wrapped in a wet paper towel in a plastic bag in crisper. Try it sautéed with olive oil, garlic and crushed red pepper for a side dish or atop pasta or bruschetta.

Chives - the smallest and earliest of our allium (onion family) crops, this is usually used as an herb for spring cooking. Mince for salads, quiche, or to top baked potatoes. Store in a sealed plastic bag in fridge.

Lettuce - both red and green leaf lettuce varieties to start the season. Store lettuce unwashed in a plastic bag. Wash and dry completely before using.

Radishes - In Rachel's native Wisconsin, radishes were a favorite crop. Radishes with salt, radishes with beer, radish and butter sandwiches...Remove the greens (which are also edible) before storing in plastic bag in fridge. These are a fun multi-colored variety called Easter Egg. This early picking is fairly mild.

Members with smaller size shares may not receive all items or quantities described

Coming Attractions!

- ◆ Spinach
- ◆ Broccoli
- ◆ Scallions



Recipe of the Week: Spicy Peanut Noodles with Bok Choy

This tasty Asian-inspired dish features several crispy spring crops. As other vegetables like carrots, broccoli and peas come into season you can add them, too.

- 1 cup natural-style peanut butter (creamy or chunky)
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp minced ginger root (or 1/4 tsp powder)
- 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper
- 1 bunch chives or 6 scallions, thinly sliced (set aside 2 tbs)
- 2 cups shredded bok choy leaves, plus their stems sliced
- 3-4 radishes, sliced
- 1 pound soba (buckwheat noodles) or thin spaghetti

Whisk together peanut butter and soy sauce in a small saucepan. Stir in 2 tbs water and all remaining ingredients except noodles and reserved scallions. Warm sauce over low heat.

Cook noodles in a large pot of boiling water until just al dente – they should still be slightly chewy. Drain and return noodles to pot. Add sauce and toss. Garnish each serving with reserved scallions or chives.

Another Recipe: Arugula Pesto

Though traditionally made with basil, pesto simply translates into “paste” and can be made with a number of greens or herbs. The peppery flavor of arugula in this version is tempered with the addition of creamy ricotta cheese.

- 1 cup packed arugula leaves
- 1/2 cup packed fresh parsley
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts or sunflower seeds
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 tbs grated Parmesan

Process greens in a blender or processor. Add garlic, nuts and Parmesan and blend to a gritty paste. Add olive oil and blend to a smooth paste. Stir in ricotta. Serve with cooked linguine or other pasta. Extra portions can be refrigerated for several days or frozen.

All the live long day...

CSA members have been hard at work on the farm! So far, 11 member households have completed their work commitments. Several have already gone beyond the 2-hour minimum and/or pledged to come back again later in the season.



Members have helped with a variety of spring farm tasks, including:

- Dividing and mulching perennial flowers
- Transplanting thousands of seedlings, including tomatoes, lettuce, flowers, peppers and more
- Installing fence posts

June and July are the months when we need the most help on the farm. There is still planting to be done, and staying ahead of the weeds is critical. We'll need some help with harvesting, trellising and about 75 more fence posts!

Members can come down to work any Tuesday between 8 am – Noon. We will also continue to post other specific work opportunities (mainly on weekend days) on the Member Web site at:

<http://www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/WorkCalendar.html>

This page also contains a link to more information including Q&As about the work commitment. If you haven't reviewed these pages yet please do so, and check back frequently for updates.

Members should plan to fulfill their work commitment by the middle of August. After that date, our need for help is less critical and we may not have many scheduled work opportunities.

Grab your work gloves and sun hat and come on down to lend a hand! If you have any questions about your work commitment, please contact us at mail@foxtailcommunityfarm.com or 966-8698.



Summer Solstice Celebration!

Join us on the farm on Saturday June 26th for the annual Summer Solstice Celebration! Outdoor games, lounging, barbecue, campfire, and overnight camping. For more info go to:

www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/FarmDayDetails.html