



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

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June 1 2015

Farmer's Notebook

*Green is the prime color of the world,
and that from which its loveliness arises.*

~ Pedro Calderon de la Barca

It's late spring in upstate New York, and that means green. Green covering the ground, green bursting from tree tops, green lining our farm fields and now, finally, green on our plates. The green of spring is its own rainbow, from translucent green buds to rich emerald grasses to bright green poplar leaves that almost glow in the warm but not yet heady spring sunlight. It peeks out a few leaves at a time and then washes over the landscape almost overnight.

On the farm, the first new greens of spring are chives and sorrel in the herb garden. We make frittatas, bake potatoes and eat the tart sorrel leaves fresh as salad. Once those are up we start checking the asparagus patch every day – this year's first spear appeared on May Day. After I've munched a few raw in the field we steam it, roast it, sauté it with garlic and grill it tossed in olive oil, balsamic vinegar and sea salt. Its season is so short that I treasure every spear, knowing I won't taste it again until next May.

This spring has been an especially good one for green things on our farm. After the coldest late winter we can ever remember (including many years in Wisconsin) and a slow dreary start to spring, our crops have flourished in the warm dry weather of May. With its heavy slow-to-drain clay soil and ready access to irrigation from our spring-fed pond, our farm thrives on dry weather.

Your first share box is just like the land – green. Some leaves, some stems, some shoots and even some sprouts. Just as the landscape soon will transition to the glimmer and buzz of summer green, soon enough our harvests will morph to reds, yellows, oranges and purples. But for now it's green. We hope you love it. ~ Rachel

This Week's Harvest

arugula/rocket - this mildly peppery green can be eaten raw or cooked. It's wonderful in hearty salads and as a substitute for basil to make a tasty spring pesto. Store loosely wrapped in damp paper towels inside a plastic bag in the fridge crisper drawer for 3-4 days. Trim away stems and wash leaves well.

asparagus (large shares only) - a perennial in the lily family that produces edible shoots from an underground "crown" (stem) for ~6 weeks each spring. Refrigerate with ends wrapped in a damp paper towel or stood upright in water, cover tops with a plastic bag.

bok choy - both stalks and leaves of this versatile Asian green are edible. Excellent in stir fries, sauteed, steamed, or thinly sliced in salad. Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the fridge.

broccoli - it's a pain to grow but everyone loves it! We'll see broccoli in spring and fall harvests. Refrigerate in airtight bag.

lettuce - the staple of salads all summer long, our season starts with a striking combination. Lime green Black Seeded Simpson paired with dark burgundy Red Salad Bowl. Store unwashed in plastic bag, wash & spin dry before using.

microgreens - teeny little mixed-variety greens harvested only two weeks after sowing. A lot of flavor packed into a tiny package! Refrigerate in sealed bag.

radishes - a fun Easter Egg variety. Eat these spicy spring gems raw, steamed, stir-fried or roasted. Refrigerate roots & edible greens in separate bags. I love whole radishes dipped in butter or olive oil and sea salt, or radishes sliced on a sandwich.

oregano - the peppery flavor of this ancient herb is found in foods from around the globe. I love to roast potatoes with olive oil, sea salt and several sprigs of fresh oregano. To keep fresh, place in water like a bouquet; cover loosely with a plastic bag to refrigerate. Extra stems may be dried for longer storage by hanging upside-down in a warm, dry, dark spot.

Coming Attractions

- ◆ Spinach
- ◆ Scallions
- ◆ Strawberries (fruit shares)



Recipe of the Week: Ginger-Garlic Roast Chicken with Stir-fried Spring Greens

I'll be making this Asian spin on traditional roast chicken with one of last fall's frozen roasters.

- 1 small whole roasting chicken (~4#)
- 2 tbs minced fresh ginger
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- mild cooking oil, such as safflower
- 1 head bok choy, in large slices
- 1 bunch broccoli, broken into florets
- 1 handful asparagus (4-5 spears), large slices
- soy sauce & sesame seeds

Rinse chicken, remove giblets and large fat pads from cavity and pluck any lingering feathers. Combine ginger, ~2/3 of the garlic and 1 tsp kosher salt. Loosen skin and rub the garlic-ginger underneath to cover chicken. Sprinkle more salt and black pepper on outside of bird. (Ideally the bird should be seasoned up to a day in advance, covered loosely and refrigerated; bring to room temp for 1 hour before roasting).

Heat oven to 400°F. Rub outer skin of bird with cooking oil and place in lightly oiled rimmed or roasting pan, breast side up. Roast 20 minutes, turn breast side down for another 20 minutes, then return to breast side up until fully cooked (internal temp 165°F). Let rest 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat ~2 tbs oil in a wok or heavy pan. Add vegetables including remaining garlic and stir-fry until crisp-tender. If you prefer veggies a bit more tender, add ¼ cup water, cover and steam 6-8 minutes. Sprinkle with soy sauce and sesame seeds. Serve with chicken alongside cooked white rice.

Is your farm organic?



This is a question we are often asked, and one that is tougher to answer now than when we began farming 20 years ago. In 2000, the USDA legally codified the term “organic” in federal regulations, which prohibit the use of synthetic chemical inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, additives, antibiotics) and genetic modification. While we adhere strictly to these standards, for a variety of reasons (financial and philosophical) we have chosen not to pursue organic certification.

We believe that true organic farming goes beyond these practices as part of a sustainable agricultural system that emphasizes local food production and consumption. As farmers we are committed to growing food in a sustainable, ecologically-sound manner - food that is, to borrow a phrase from Michael Pollan, "good to eat and good to think". We strive to limit fossil fuel use, mulching crops with hay instead of plastic and watering with sprinklers instead of plastic dripline. We use crop management techniques like cover cropping, crop rotation, cloth row cover, beneficial insects, minerals and organic nutrients. Our animals are raised humanely and integrated in growing cycles.

We also believe that farming is more than the growing, buying and selling of food - it is about building connections between people, the land around us and the food we eat. We strive to educate and actively engage CSA members in our farm community. As the same multinational corporations that dominate conventional agriculture and food production steadily overtake the “organic” food sector, these local relationships and investments are imperative.

A century ago, most of you would have grown your own food. As CSA members, you are directly supporting the continued legacy of family farming and helping to reform a food system that is, to put it bluntly, dangerously out of whack. Ask questions, come see your food growing, and join us in the field to help make it grow. We look forward to sharing the bounty of another farm season with you!



From the archives

Need more recipe ideas? CSA newsletters back to 2010 are on our website:

www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html

Here are a few favorites to re-visit this week:

<i>June 6 2011:</i>	<i>June 4 2012:</i>	<i>June 8 2014:</i>
~ Foxtail Farm quiche	~ Asian barley salad	~ Bok choy salad ~ Arugula pesto