



Notes From the Pea Patch

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Farmer's Notebook

Ever since our third CSA season we have offered fruit shares to our members. Over the last 9 years we became accustomed to each fruit's harvest season and where to get it. We thought we had it down pretty well - until this past winter when mother nature threw us a double whammy.

The stage was set with one of the mildest winters on record, if you want to call it a winter. Only one big snowstorm, temps in the forties for much of it and a warm March marked a disaster for ski resorts but easy living for ourselves and our animals. However, these mild temperatures played havoc with local fruit crops. The stone fruits (peaches, plums, and nectarines) never went fully dormant. So when we finally had a cold snap (which included the coldest night in ten years), all the buds were killed. Bob Fix said it is the first time in 30 years that there is not a single peach in the orchard.

Then March came in like a lamb and stayed warm throughout. Cherries and apples started to flower thinking to get an early start to the year. But then an early April freeze (lows in the teens) killed off many of these flower buds. There was some worry that the apple crop would be lost, but most trees/orchards made out ok. However, sweet and red sour cherries were lost. Luckily, having been picking at Fix Bros. for 8 years, we were able to glean the limited sweet cherries that made it. And next weekend we will be picking Black Morello sour cherries, a Russian variety that shrugged off the freeze and is quite plentiful.

So our well-tuned picking schedule has been turned upside down, but that is nothing new in farming. Our revised schedule includes raspberries this week, black sour cherries next, then blueberries the following week. Next would come peaches (still exploring options on that) then maybe an early pear before melons ripen in mid-August. We'll keep you posted. ~ *Eric*

This Week's Harvest

our best guess for what will be in this week's share boxes - subject to change at packing time:

bunching onions - early scallions are replaced with these young sweet onions, which are milder and juicier than storage onions. Store in fridge.

cabbage - once among the most popular garden and grocery crops in this country. Store tightly wrapped in fridge for a week or so. For best flavor, remove and discard the core and thick outer leaves. This is a great time of year to experiment with coleslaw dishes.

radicchio - a cultivated form of wild chicory that resembles a small, fibrous wine-colored lettuce. While you can simply add leaves to a salad, this vegetable is truly special (and milder in flavor) when cooked, as in a variety of Italian dishes. Store in plastic bag in crisper drawer. Trim away bottom stem and core.

summer savory - a lovely summer herb with an earthy aroma and flavor similar to thyme. Traditionally paired with fresh beans, this is also good in soups, salads or other dishes. Store as a bouquet on the counter in a small jar of water. Dry any extra by hanging small bunches of stems (ideally in a dark, dry, airy space.)

**also... beets ~ broccoli & cauliflower
(rotating) ~ cucumbers (rotating)~
lettuce ~ summer squash**

Fruit Shares: raspberries from Stanton's Farm in Feura Bush. Raspberries are labor-intensive to pick and highly perishable - but so delicious! Store unwashed for 1-2 days in fridge; wash just before using. *Conventionally grown.*

Coming Attractions

- ◆ Cherry Tomatoes
- ◆ Swiss Chard
- ◆ Black Sour Cherries



Recipe of the Week: Stir-fried Beet Greens with Chili and Ginger

From two of my favorite chef-idols: Sarah Raven's adaptation of Madhur Jaffrey's recipe.

- 1 pound beet greens
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 1 green chili, cut into long slivers
- 1 inch piece of ginger, peeled and slivered
- ½ tsp salt

Strip beet greens from their stalks and cut into fine ribbons. Heat oil in a large pan over high. When very hot, put in chili and ginger. Stir for a minute and then add greens.

Cover the pan, turn heat to low and cook until the leaves have wilted. Add salt + ¼ cup water, stir and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook on low, stirring occasionally, until greens are tender.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread

This special & beloved recipe came from a friend in Wisconsin. I like to make these as jumbo muffins.

Dry ingredients:

- 1 ½ - 2 cups sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- 2 1/3 cups flour
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ cup nuts (optional)

Wet ingredients:

- 3 cups grated zucchini
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup applesauce, vegetable oil *or* mix
- 2 tsp. vanilla

Mix dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, combine wet ingredients. Blend with dry. Fill 2 lightly greased loaf pans or muffin tins. Bake at 350° F for 45 minutes (25-30 mins for muffins) – they'll still appear moist when done, toothpick will be just barely clean. Let cool 10-15 minutes, remove from pan, then let cool completely before slicing.

Grilled Radicchio?

When you look at a head of radicchio, the grill may not be the first piece of cooking equipment that comes to mind. But it's summer, and grilling is a terrific way to prepare many of your CSA vegetables, including radicchio. Grilling this oddball crop mellows its bitterness and brings out a subtle nutty flavor.

Here's how: Quarter a head of radicchio, leaving a bit of stem attached to hold the leaves together in a wedge ~ Brush with olive oil and sprinkle with kosher or sea salt ~ Grill over high heat uncovered until lightly charred (not burned!) all over. Eat warm.



And now what? Here are a few tasty ideas we've tried or found on various cooking blogs and sites:

- Serve alongside grilled chicken with fresh lemon wedges
- Make a dressing of kosher salt, mustard, garlic, balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Chop grilled radicchio into bite-sized pieces, toss with dressing and serve warm sprinkled with grated Parmesan or Romano cheese.
- Before grilling, wrap each quarter in a slice of applewood smoked bacon. Grill until bacon is crisp. Top with a vinaigrette of lemon juice, Dijon, olive oil & toasted cumin seeds.
- Marinate radicchio quarters in a blend of crushed garlic, crushed red pepper, thyme, balsamic and olive oil before grilling. When the quarters are browned, tuck a piece of fresh mozzarella between the leaves and finish on the grill to melt. Serve drizzled with extra marinade.
- Top each quarter of grilled radicchio with a spoonful of chevre, a sprinkle of fresh savory or thyme, a few grinds of coarse black pepper and a splash of balsamic.
- Make a slaw with sliced grilled radicchio, apple matchsticks, red onion, balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper and sugar. Serve as a side or a topping for grilled burgers, steak or salmon.