



THE VEGGIE VOICE

Village Acres Farm Summer CSA • May 26, 2009 • Distribution 2 of 25

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"The sun comes up in the morning, Shines that light around. One day, without no warning, Things start jumping up from the ground." Neil Young, "Home Grown"

Farm Note • from Farmer Roy:

The Summer Share season seems smoothly started, so savor this second slice of selected harvests. Our crew of workers, apprentices (also workers) and managers (workers also) work wonderfully together, and the weather with alternating wings of sun and rain has wrought a good work to reward your wistful wishes for worthwhile nourishment.

But...someone found some eggs that were not as fresh as they should be, and so I'm thinking about food safety. So are many others in this day of food contamination and massive recalls. And growers of produce and government officials now deliberate ways of reducing the risks. Small growers, like us, also think about this concern, especially now that a bad egg turned up. Yes, we know where that bad egg came from. Our hens' first pasture of the season is the orchard, which provides some special hiding places a fussy hen may choose to hide her eggs. When these are spied, maybe days later, they are to be kept isolated from "known to be fresh" eggs, but someone slipped up. You shouldn't find an off-color egg with runny yoke, but if it should happen please cook it for your dog or cat, or the birds (or throw it away) and let us know! Thanks.

Have our CSA members ever become sick after eating our veggies? We haven't yet heard of it, and try to ensure it would not happen. But if it ever happens we would like to know about it immediately. We would then immediately inform all our CSA members, to reduce the risk to others, and also attempt to determine if contamination happened or if there was other cause of the illness. Following certified organic practices helps us ensure that the risks of contamination are reduced, and yet, unlike many large conventional producers we do not irradiate or dip our veggies in chlorine or any such chemicals. So there is always an outside chance that a robin or a sparrow flying over our strawberry patch (or lettuce, spinach, etc.) could target a berry that would find its way into your box. (Of course, if during harvest the whitish-brownish blotch is seen, the berry will not go into your box). In conclusion, the best policy for everyone is to **wash everything you eat, especially uncooked items!**

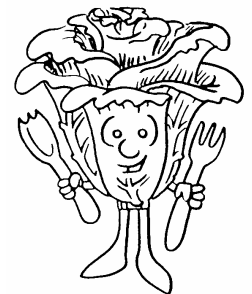
Produce and Cooking Notes

Asparagus: Try grilling it! Wrap stalks in foil and place on the grill, turning several times, for 4-6 minutes. The asparagus steams and takes on the smoky flavor of the grill. To prepare: Snap off or cut the woody base. Eat raw in a salad or with dip, or steam by arranging spears loosely in a skillet with 1 inch of lightly salted boiling water and simmering for 3-5 minutes. Run under cold water to stop the cooking process, then drizzle with butter and lemon. You can also roast asparagus in a single layer, sprinkled with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, at 400 for 20 minutes or until tender.

Kohlrabi with top: This is the purple bulb with leaves. A swollen stem that grows above ground, kohlrabi is tasty raw – peeled and thinly sliced with a little sprinkle of salt. It can also be cooked whole and unpeeled like a beet, and then peeled and chopped when it's tender with butter, salt and pepper. It does not have to be peeled after cooking. Try adding it stir-fries too. See the recipe on the back.

Store kohlrabi globe and leaves separately. The globe will last about 1 month refrigerated in a plastic bag. Wrap leaves in a damp towel or place in a plastic bag in hydrator drawer of frig. Use greens as soon as possible.

Rhubarb: We received numerous positive emails and web posts on the rhubarb (thank you), especially in reference to the recipe in last week's Veggie Voice. Try this simple sauce: chop the rhubarb (don't peel it), add a tiny bit of water and cook until soft and thick, adding sugar (or rapadura) or honey (it'll take a lot!) to taste. Stir it often, and don't cook it in an



IN THE BOX

Asparagus
Kohlrabi
Rhubarb
Spinach
Head Lettuce
Radishes
Basil
Greens Choice
State College Only:
Lettuce Mix

aluminum pan: the acidic rhubarb will react with the metal. Serve over ice cream or with yogurt. Rhubarb leaves are poisonous (high in oxalic acid), so chop off any remaining leaf. The stalks are perfectly safe.

Spinach: See the *Ricotta Spinach Dip* recipe on the back. High in Vitamins A and K, spinach is best on its own or in a sandwich, though it's also excellent added at the last minute to soups or stir-fries, or sautéed with garlic and then mixed with cream cheese for a dip. Rinse spinach leaves thoroughly in a cool bath as soil and grit tend to accumulate on the underside of the leaves. Pat dry with a towel or spin dry (as you would lettuce leaves).

Head Lettuce: Most of the seed catalogs recommend transplanting lettuce at 12" in the row and 12" between rows. We used to do that, but found it wasted a lot of space, especially when the lettuce was young. Now, we transplant it at 6" in the row and 6" between the rows; and harvest every other lettuce head when their outer leaves start touching each other. Hence, the lettuce heads in your share today are "young" lettuce heads. With good weather, next week, you'll get the full grown heads.

Radishes: Slice these red gems on a green salad, or make a radish sandwich with some goat cheese and pepper on sourdough bread. Radishes are also good in a salad combination with orange sections, sliced red onion and toasted sunflower seeds. Or you can always sauté or steam the little guys and serve with butter, salt and pepper. Save your radish greens to toss into a stir-fry. Some of the greens got a little chewed by the flea beetles.

Basil: Just a tease amount in your share, to help get your olfactory and taste senses ready for the larger amounts coming. Dave and crew have been busy transplanting lots of basil plants into our two production greenhouses. Keep basil in a cup of water on your kitchen counter (above 50F) – not in the refrigerator, or it will wilt and darken.

Greens Choice: Kale or Chard or Endive (2 heads) or Collards: Take your choice. The boxes have been prepacked with the choices, so please let us know what you'd like when you pick up.

Community News

Strawberry Festival: Join us for a fun time down by the creek. Hayrides, games, potluck, campfire, and of course strawberry picking. Saturday June 13 from 3:00 – 7:00 PM. Let us know you're coming by responding to the survey link sent to you via email OR email or phone us.

Blue Rooster Farm: On Special for June 2, minute steaks for \$6.75/lb. Minute steaks are especially convenient because they thaw quickly and are good in stir fries or as steak sandwiches. Sign up for my emailing at www.bluroosterfarm.com Thanks, Julie

Recipes

Ricotta Spinach Dip

- from *Still Life with Menu Cookbook*

- ½ lb. fresh spinach
- 12 oz ricotta cheese (or use cream cheese or sour cream if you like a richer dip)
- 3 scallions, very finely minced
- 3 radishes, finely minced
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp. fresh dill, minced (optional)
- ¼ c. finely minced water chestnuts (optional)
- optional garnishes: fresh parsley, chives, olives, cherry tomatoes

Wash and dry spinach completely using a salad spinner followed by paper towels, and mince fine. (A few whirls in the food processor works great.) Place the ricotta in a medium-large bowl. Use a wire whisk to beat it until quite smooth. Stir in the spinach and all other ingredients, except garnishes, including (or not) the dill and minced water chestnuts. Cover tightly, and chill until very cold. Garnish as you wish and serve with chips, raw

veggies or crackers. If you have any left over, use it to fill sandwiches or omelets, or as a baked potato topping.

Sautéed Kohlrabi (modified) From *Asparagus to Zucchini*

- 1 to 2 kohlrabi
- 2 T's butter or light oil
- ½ medium onion, diced
- ½ to 1 tbsp fresh herbs (chervil)
- ½ tsp salt

Grate kohlrabi, place in colander, and sprinkle with salt. Let stand for 30 minutes to drain. Heat butter over medium heat, add onions, and sauté a few minutes. Stir in kohlrabi, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook 10 minutes. Increase heat to medium and cook 2 more minutes. Remove from heat and stir in fresh herbs. Makes 2 servings.

Edited by Patrick Smith, CSA Manager
Village Acres Farm is owned and operated by Roy & Hope Brubaker

