



THE VEGGIE VOICE

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"Most people now are living on the far side of a broken connection, and this is potentially catastrophic... they are fed, clothed, and sheltered from sources towards which they feel no gratitude and exercise no responsibility." – Wendell Berry

Farm Note • a word from the Village Acres Crew:

The Strawberry Festival has come and gone and we're all happy for those who could visit the farm over the weekend! Despite the wet weather leading up to the festival, which produced some unripened strawberries and some mudpits down by the creek, Saturday ended up being beautiful. Meanwhile, though, the rain left its mark on the farm. Crops languish in the hardening-off area and in the greenhouse, growing ever larger in their plastic trays without the chance to be transplanted outside. Weeds sprout and grow unhindered; even if they are hoed up, they can live for days in a clump of wet soil before growing new roots and reconnecting themselves to the earth. Such are the challenges of growing vegetables here, and we are always looking for ways to keep our fields a little drier and a little better drained. One method we have been using more and more is building raised beds – even a bed five or six inches higher than the surrounding ground can greatly improve drainage and our ability to work the soil. We were able to build some raised beds last fall and keep them through the winter, so that their improved drainage could go to work right away in the spring, and now many of this week's beets come from just such a bed, which was dry enough to allow us to plant in March. Every year, hopefully, we become a little better prepared to deal with the variability involved in farming, and the particular quirks, such as our heavy clay soil, specific to our own patch of land.

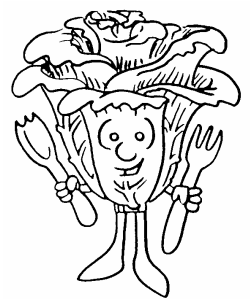
This is one of the challenges of farming sustainably, and of thinking about a farm as a local ecological system rather than as a production factory for a commodity. Each acre is different, each year is different, and each and every farmer is a little different as well, and what works for one person may not work at all for another. It's amazing to visit different farmers as part of my apprenticeship and hear them describe their own policies and rules for success – more than once I've heard two different growers, doing things in completely opposite ways, both state unequivocally that their own particular methods are the only way to succeed. This can be aggravating to someone trying to figure out what to do in their own (slightly different) situation, but it's also a good thing. The little differences between our land and our neighbors' can be challenging, but they're also the things that make a place identifiable and worth protecting. Maybe this week, after all that rain, is a good time to reflect on what makes our own places special, and how we can work with those qualities rather than against them. - Dave

Produce and Cooking Notes

Strawberries: All the rain and overcast weather last week affected the harvest quantity and quality. Hence, only one pint of strawberries in your share today. See the *Strawberry Shortcake* recipe on our website. Some of these are from the Zooks, fellow farmers, who farm naturally, but are not certified organic.

Summer Squash: Rinse or wipe down summer squash if needed; no need to peel. Grill halves 3-4 minutes on the hottest part of the grill, and then 8-10 min. on the side, basting with oil and herbs.

Snow Peas: "A classic stir-fry vegetables, particularly popular in Chinese cooking. Sauté alone or with other veggies and/or meats, adding pea pods in the last few minutes of cooking. Add raw or lightly cooked pea pods to a variety of salads." (*From Asparagus to Zucchini*, p. 116) To prepare: Snip off the stem ends and pull out the tough string that runs along its side. The pod is eaten, i.e. not shelled. These are from the Zooks.



IN THE BOX

Strawberries
Summer Squash
Snow Peas
New Potatoes
Head Lettuce
Asparagus
Chard
Beets with tops
Garlic Scapes
Basil
Pea Shoots
Scallions

New Red Potatoes: “New” isn’t a variety, it just means they’re fresh from the ground, with thin skins and higher moisture and sugar content than stored potatoes. Great for potato salad or home fries, they’re best just boiled with the skins on. These are from the Zooks.

Head Lettuce: You’re getting two heads of gorgeous lettuce in your share. If you don’t have a salad spinner for drying the lettuce or other greens, you can put them in a pillowcase or mesh bag and swing it around your head outside. The neighbors will love it.

Asparagus: Almost the end of the asparagus season. Enjoy it while it lasts! Snap off the woody base, and then you can steam or roast the tender shoots. Asparagus is also great added raw to salads.

Chard: Last year, the chard planting did not do so well. This year, there’s more chard than we know what to do with. Hopefully, you like experimenting with new recipes, or twists on older ones. The *Spanakopita* recipe below is quite simply delicious. It comes from fellow CSA member, Amber.

Beets with tops: “Beets are very versatile, lending themselves well to basic usage, both cooked and raw, and incorporation into recipes. Beets are high in nutrients, such as vitamin A and C, and also the carotenes. [The beet greens give you] generous portions of vitamin C, calcium, and iron.” (*From Asparagus to Zucchini*, p. 26)

Garlic Scapes: See our website for the *Garlic Scape Pesto* recipe.

Basil: See the *Pesto* recipe on our website. Keep basil in a cup of water on your kitchen counter (above 50° F) – not in the refrigerator, or it will wilt and darken.

Pea Shoots with blossoms: Just a few pea shoots in your share this week. One member put them in a glass of water on her kitchen counter, prior to eating.

Scallions: These are from the Zooks. These mild onions are great for in an omelet or mixed with rice and meat.

Community News

CSA Boxes and Tills: Please return the CSA boxes and tills (what the strawberries came in) next week.

Recipes

Spanakopita Provided by Amber, a Village Acres' CSA Member.

- 1 package phyllo dough (Athenos brand is good)
- Big bag full of spinach, swiss chard, or other greens
- 1 onion, diced (green onion is great)
- 5-6 garlic cloves, minced
- small handful fresh dill
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- block of feta cheese, chopped into small cubes
- olive oil
- salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Sauté the onion and garlic, salted and peppered, in 3 Tbsp of olive oil, until soft. Add the greens, and sauté until wilted. Remove the whole mixture and place in a colander to drain the excess liquid (or if you are in a hurry, squeeze it out by hand). When the greens mixture has cooled slightly, stir in the eggs, cheese and chopped dill.

To assemble: Take one sheet of phyllo dough and lay on a clean surface, spray lightly with olive oil spray (or baste with olive oil or butter with a pastry brush - spraying is better because then it's only lightly oiled). Layer another sheet directly on top and spray that one lightly. Continue for 10 sheets. Place 1/3 of the greens mixture along one of the long edges of the phyllo, and

roll it up to make a long tube filled with the mixture. Transfer to a baking sheet. Repeat process to make 2 more rolls.

Bake at 375 F for 20-30 minutes, or until lightly brown.

Beet Chocolate Cake - from *Simply in Season*

Puree in blender until smooth. Set aside:

- 2 c. beets, cooked, peeled and chopped
- ½ c. applesauce

Combine in large mixing bowl and beat well:

- 1½ c. sugar
- ½ c. oil
- ½ c. yogurt
- 3 eggs

Add along with pureed beets and beat well:

- ½ c. cocoa
- 1½ tsp. vanilla

Gradually sift into batter, mixing just til blended:

- 1½ c. flour
- 1 c. whole wheat flour
- 1½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Pour batter into greased 9x13 inch pan and sprinkle ½ c. chocolate chips and ½ c. chopped nuts on top. Bake at 350 for 40-50 min.

Edited by Patrick Smith, CSA Manager

Village Acres Farm is owned and operated by Roy & Hope Brubaker

