



SUNSHINE IN A BOX



Volume 6 issue 7

July 1st 2020

CSA Week 4

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Mid-Summer

Collaboration and Connection

At its best the CSA model is a grand collaboration between Mother Nature, farmer, and home cook, and this co-creating is the essence of the local food movement. As your farmer I definitely romanticize the moment you unpack your veggies and inspiration strikes you to create amazing vegetable dishes. Perhaps at times there is some puzzlement or a heavy reliance on the newsletter but it is amazing to think that no two CSA members will prepare the produce exactly the same way. (Cont. p.3)

Farm Updates

A quick field walk after Monday's rain was strange and wonderful—after not experiencing the sensation of a good soaking rain much this summer, the sights and smells felt so foreign but magical. The farm was altered into a parallel state of being. Every time I've envisioned planting this year it is into a dry scratchy top layer with moisture deep below and the sun beating down overhead. After two wet years in 2018 and 2019, the water table seems high despite the dry spring this year, and I

have remained optimistic that plants will be able to reach deep for water. Seeing most plants still standing upright after pretty heavy rains overnight is a good sign of nice root development. I was also happy to see no major signs of flooding which is an indication of good soil structure.

Rain also means weed pressure is up and pests are starting to reproduce faster. I noticed potato beetles for the first time this week. After not planting potatoes for a few years I was hoping they would not find us but they did. I was able to hand-pick them off the couple of plants they were congregated on, and I will continue to monitor and hand remove as needed.

What are your thoughts on this summer's field day format? I am envisioning a one way, self-guided farm tour. Does this interest you? Let me know your thoughts!

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Week 4 Veggies

Baby Carrots: Small spring carrots are great for a snack or roasted whole. You can also use them in the stir fry recipe below.

Arugula: Remove rubber band and place in bag or stem end in a glass of water in the fridge for storage. Arugula is best raw but can also be wilted on top of pizza or added into herb sauce (pesto). Stems can also be used—try finely chopping stems and then make small balls of goat cheese with a melon baller and roll in the chopped arugula stems for an interesting addition to a cheese plate—the bite of the arugula pairs well with smoothness of goat cheese.

Peas: Flowering has slowed this week but should pick back up again. Enjoy this spring treat while they last!

Summer Squash: Try the stir fry recipe below with this week's summer squash. It can also be eaten raw—I like to slice it, salt it and then marinate with some oil and vinegar dressing.

Swiss chard: Spinach of the summer! I prefer cooking with this dark leafy green versus eating raw. Remove stems, cut into

ribbons, and sauté for an easy side dish. Some disease damage is starting to show but this should be able to be mitigated with cultural practices

Basil: Try a basil sauce with just basil, olive oil, other fresh herbs, salt and pepper to use as a condiment with roasted carrots. If you don't have a food processor, you can use a mortar and pestle to make herb sauces. If you don't have a mortar and pestle you can just use a knife chopping herbs very finely with a little salt. If you don't have a knife let me know and I will get you one.

Mint: Basil and mint make a wonderful flavor combination in pesto. You can also use mint with peas and carrots for a surprising freshness. Uplifting and cooling.

Savory: Used commonly in French cuisine (it is one of the main ingredients in Herbes de Provence) this herb has a cooling drying effect. Low moisture means it dries easily. The stem will turn bright purple-blue when dry. Pairs well with carrots and other root vegetables or in Mediterranean cooking.

Kale (Full Shares): More ideas to come!

Recipes

Vegetable Lo Mein

For the Lo Mein Sauce:

- 2 Tablespoons Rice Vinegar (or white vinegar)
- 2 Tablespoons Soy Sauce (or Liquid Aminos)
- 2 Tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup or honey
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon ginger powder (or 1 inch fresh ginger root, grated)
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- Hot sauce to taste

- 1 small zucchini, diced
- 1/2 cup snap peas sliced thin at an angle
- 3-4 carrots, sliced thin at an angle
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons peanut or sunflower oil
- 3-5 fresh basil leaves
- 3-5 mint leaves

Udon or soba noodles, prepared according to package directions

Cook noodles according to directions, drain, rinse, and toss with sesame oil. Set aside while preparing the sauce and vegetables. Prepare sauce by combining all ingredients (vinegar, soy sauce, maple syrup, ginger, white pepper, hot sauce, water, and sesame oil). Prepare vegetables keeping them separate. You now have your "mise en place" prepared and are ready to stir fry!

In a wok or large sauté pan, heat sesame and peanut or sunflower oil over medium high heat. Once oil is hot (it will appear thin and shimmer when you swirl it around the pan), add carrots and stir fry for a couple minutes until just golden, then add the zucchini and cook for a few minutes, and lastly the snap peas. Once vegetables are tender yet crisp, pour into a bowl and set aside. Allow pan to re-heat and add more oil if needed. Stir fry noodles until they begin to sizzle and caramelize. Reintroduce the cooked vegetables to the wok and pour sauce over the top, tossing all ingredients to combine until the sauce thickens slightly. To finish, cut basil and mint into a chiffonade and sprinkle over individual servings. Recipe can be adapted to use other vegetables, herbs or substitute rice for noodles to make fried rice.



(Collaboration and Connection from p. 1) Every winter I envision CSA boxes with perfect combinations of produce and herbs that will create meals that are more than the sum of its parts but then reality happens and Mother Nature decides the dill seed heads won't be ready at the same time as cucumbers or the basil won't be ready at the same time as tomatoes. But then every once and a while I finally get to put bok choy, scallions, and cilantro in the same share (the timing still hasn't ever quite worked out on that one yet but maybe someday.)

Despite our best efforts on all sides there will be things that go to waste and I hope you don't feel too guilty about that—it happens. But do remember that you can compost almost anywhere, and produce might be salvageable for a broth or other use even when it's a little past it's prime.

It is a great privilege for me to be this intermediary between Mother Nature and your home cooking adventures. Thank you for trusting me to grow and choose some of your food, and letting go of a little control over mealtime to the whims of the universe. I hope you are inspired by using this food and I look forward to collaborating with you the rest of this season and beyond.

Ode to Chickens

Your morning greeting is demanding yet grateful. A little water and chicken feed goes a long way when days are long and grass and bugs are plentiful.

Your late morning cacophony can only mean the daily egg laying ritual is happening, preferably in dim light and a little privacy please. Poor broody hens—go outside. You need a dust bath.

All afternoon, working hard foraging and harvesting the sun to transform into yolks. The world is your oyster! Also, have some oyster shells.

Maybe that human won't see us sneaking into the garden. Ope she saw us—and she's mad...better go pretend the fence is working.

Dusk! Time to get a good spot to roost for the night in the cozy coop. Thank you chickies for your eggs today and goodnight, stay safe, see you tomorrow.