



SUNSHINE IN A BOX



Special Edition Volume 6
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Special Edition Newsletter

Farm Updates

Greetings!

To provide a familiar source of connection, I have put together this newsletter for you to address the developing situation.

The CSA is moving forward! We still need good food and to connect with each other! Seeds are sprouting, shares are still available and now is the time to sign up. There are a handful left. **Please confirm availability before sending in your sign up info and payment.**

I am still processing everything happening right now but I would like to provide some of my initial thoughts on what this means for us as a CSA

Covid-19 Response

One silver lining of this pandemic has been its ability to crystalize what is truly important. Here are a few points that I keep coming back to:

1) **Food Safety.** Food safety is built into the culture at Solar Fresh Produce. I have attended the Produce Safety Alliance Grower

Training Course which fulfills the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) requirements along with many other produce safety trainings at farm conferences. My background in food service for over 10 years means safe practices are always on the front of my mind. Still, no training can fully prepare us for what we might be facing. (Cont. p 3)

Connection

Even before this strange situation started, I chose the theme of "Connection" for this year's CSA newsletters and I hope the CSA will be source of familiar connection to each other and the planet that sustains us.

John Muir once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." We are all in this together! As we think about looking after our human friends, we can't deny the role plants and animals play in a holistic and long term solution to our modern challenges.

The research is clear—soil health goes beyond the physical structure and chemical nutrients present and there is a strange alchemy at play we have yet to fully understand. (cont. p. 3)

Recipes

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Recipes

White Beans with Dandelion Greens and Crostini

1 pound cannellini (or any white bean) canned and drained or cooked
 6 garlic cloves, 5 left whole and 1 minced
 ½ cup and 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
 1 tablespoon dried thyme

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
 1 bunch dandelion greens, tough stems trimmed
 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 Crostini, for serving
 Finely grated Parmigiana-Reggiano cheese, for serving
 Fresh basil, for serving

Combine cooked or canned beans, whole garlic cloves, ½ cup oil, and thyme in a large pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until beans are tender, 10-15 minutes depending on beans used. Season with salt, and continue cooking 5 more minutes. Let cool completely in cooking liquid, then drain.

Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium high. Add minced garlic, and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add dandelion greens, and cook, tossing, just until wilted, about 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper, and add vinegar.

Serve beans with dandelion greens and crostini. Drizzle with oil, sprinkle with cheese, and top with basil. (Living, 2016)

Carrot Cookies

1/8 teaspoon baking soda
 ½ cup honey
 ½ cup butter
 1 egg, slightly beaten
 1 cup sifted flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1/8 teaspoon salt

1 cup quick-cooking oatmeal
 ½ cup chopped nuts
 ½ cup raisings
 ½ cup grated raw carrot
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Stir baking soda into the honey. Cream the butter, beat the egg into it. Add the honey mixture. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt into the honey-and-butter mixture, and mix well. Fold oatmeal, nuts, raisins, and grated carrots into mixture, and add the vanilla. Drop by the teaspoon onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 12 minutes, or until golden brown. Makes about 50 cookies. (Heriteau, 1970)



(Covid-19 Response cont. from p 1) I am always working under the assumption that I might be serving our community's most vulnerable members. I will be taking this time to review food safety plans and update as needed.

As we move closer to the season, I will make decisions about any changes that might help our CSA be more resilient to growing public health concerns (for example how our pick up operates, utilization of single use packaging, etc.) and communicate these changes to you for feedback. As a smart and savvy group of CSA members that you are, please let me know if you have any ideas.

2) **Resilience.** This is our 6th season of the CSA and every year the training wheels come off little by little. This season feels different so far and I am hopeful that the steps I've taken to create a resilient operation will work. As returning or new CSA members, you've made a huge investment in creating a solid foundation to our community and I hope that this investment comes back to you manyfold. This should be a good season. I am feeling mobilized and energized to fill the needs of our community more than ever before. I feel fortunate that during this time I can move forward with my plans and be ever so attentive to the plants and animals during this period of isolation.

3) **Ethics.** I have been motivated to this work by a set of ethical principles that guide our relationship with the land. As we face new ethical dilemmas, I want to make sure food is accessible to everyone who wants to be part of this community. If you are facing financial hardship right now please know that I want to work with you. If you can afford to pay more right now, this extra amount will be placed into a **Member Fund** to help reduce the cost for those struggling financially. The Member Fund is just that-- reserved for the members of the CSA. We are in this together! Look for an updated member agreement form where you can elect to donate an amount to this fund to support your fellow CSA members.

4) **Community.** This is what it's all about. We need each other more than ever right now and you can expect the same weekly updates with grounding recipes and uplifting stories and pictures. As I step outside this morning and see and hear the birds returning to the farm, I know that mother earth will continue to provide. Please let me know of any questions or concerns you have and we will adapt as needed and stay safe.

(Connection cont. from p. 1) The soil needs good food, just like us. In a time where an invisible microbe is a source of fear and anxiety it is easy to forget the microscopic "good guys" that sustain life. These soil microbes are waking back up and keeping them in balance ensures a healthy ecosystem underfoot that can keep cycling nutrients. These microbes in the soil are like miniature fertilizer packets for the plants and they even help the plants fight off pests and pathogens. Building on this community is a network of mycelium that connects the plants roots with moisture and nutrients. The more we can build this network, the more chemical reactions will take place to create a vital and efficient system resilient to the numerous challenges the garden might face.

Moving on up the food chain, it is so important to avoid chemicals that harm any life and throw the whole system out of balance. The insect world is an ally in gardening and I can't wait for the return of my insect friends this spring. Bird activity is a sure sign that they will be here soon. And of course we can't forget the plants who give so much to us and act as a connector between the below and above ground world. With this knowledge it is possible that we can be in right relationship with the land and become part of the biotic community again. Thanks and stay safe, Sarah