



SUNSHINE IN A BOX



Issue 4 Volume 5

July 3rd 2019

## IN THIS ISSUE

# Celebrate Summer

## Farm Updates

Despite rain alternating with hot temps this week things have been moving forward. The beginning of July is when I start to think about fall crops and I was happy to get some storage cabbage transplants started that I will hopefully be able to plant out later this month. Weed management continues to be an issue and I've been finding it easier to tackle some of the smaller weeding projects than take on the dauntingly larger areas. Might end up just using a scissors...

Summer crops are finally starting to do something—beans are up but it will still be a while before flowering, summer squash is starting to produce, and cucumbers and tomatoes will be catching up soon.

## Finding Inspiration

This weekend a fellow board member of the Sustainable Farming Association—Crow River Chapter hosted a field day at his farm (most field days consist of farmers standing around in fields, unlike the Solar Fresh Field Day which is chock full of food and activities). I have to admit that driving one hour and looking at acres of sweet corn and black beans and the fleet of millions of dollars of

equipment used to manage them wasn't exactly how I wanted to spend my Sunday night, but I wanted to support farmer Glen and I was glad I did because only four other people showed up for his field day.

During the tour, we looked at Glen's shop, his numerous tractors and implements including an impressive flame weeder he home fabricated, we drove around to his various fields of peas, sweet corn, and black beans and discussed his management methods and which tools from his arsenal he had and would be using. In attendance was a vegetable gardener, a dairy farmer, and two row crop farmers looking to transition to organic (Glen does things the organic way and is certified). Cont p. 2

## Solar Fresh Field Day 2019!

Where: 1370 Eckert Ave SE

When: Saturday July 13<sup>th</sup> 11:00am-2:00pm

Who: CSA members and their families!

RSVP to Sarah

@solarfreshproduce@gmail.com

## Recipes

Kale Bohemian Style

Thai Lettuce Wraps

Page 3



## Week 4 Produce

Summer is here, summer veggies will be coming soon.

Page 2

# Week 4 Produce

**Kale:** Everyone's favorite CSA veggie! To prep kale—strip leaves off of stem. Place in bowl of water and let any dirt sink to the bottom. Remove leaves and pat dry. Roughly chop and it is ready to use. It can be sauteed, added to broth and cooked, or roasted in the oven with oil and seasonings. Garlic can also be tossed in oil and grilled.

**Romaine Lettuce:** Make a grilled wedge salad—slice in half keeping the stem end in tact. Drizzle with oil and sear on a hot grill. Drizzle salad with a blue cheese dressing.

**Peas:** Larger size peas can be shelled if desired. Smaller peas can be stir fried or tossed into a salad.

**Garlic Scapes:** To prep garlic scapes—trim the flower off and also trim off the opposite end about 1-2 inches. At this point, it can be finely minced (2 scapes equals about one clove garlic) or you can rough chop and place in food processor with salt, pepper, oil, and nuts if desired (I like walnut or pistachioes) and process until desired smoothness. Pesto will store in the fridge for several months to a year. Keep a thin layer of olive oil over the top of the pesto to keep from oxidizing. Garlic scapes also work well on the grill. Try grilling and then chill and blend with mayo for a smoky garlicky aioli.

**Mint and Cilantro:** Keep herbs in a glass with water or a plastic bag with a paper towel to keep fresh. Chop just before using. You can sprinkle chopped herbs on hummus with a drizzle of sesame oil to dress it up or sprinkle on lettuce wraps. Also goes great with peanut sauce. Add to garlic scape pesto for added herbal flavor.

**Broccoli or Kohlrabi:** I will rotate broccoli and kohlrabi as available. Kohlrabi has the flavor of cabbage and texture of an apple and can be peeled and sliced thin to eat raw. It can also be cooked (add to garlic scape stir fry).

Full shares also get baby carrots



Inspiration continued from p. 1 As we toured the fields, Glen left plenty of thoughtful pauses for questions to be asked, and as the tour progressed even I started to gain perspective on growing these crops organically compared to conventional spraying methods. We of course started to bond as a group of farmers all in this battle together, just trying to figure out how to make it all work. In general, Glen is making about twice as many passes over his fields than in conventional farming (keep in mind these passes are creeping along at speeds of 1-10 miles per hour). He has to take a lot of risks (just like the conventional farmers) and is charged with innovating methods that not only retain his organic certification but also work to maintain soil health and successful yields of his crops. Some of his fields were doing better than others, but none were failing completely.

As I have been reflecting on the tour over the last few days I realized that there were a lot of "takeaways" from Glen's farm. First of all, his calm and unflappable energy was just nice to be around. Another point

he made was that we have a lot of tools at our disposal and we just need to think about which one will work best. As I was trying to figure out how to manage weeds in the newly germinated green bean field at my farm, this advice came in handy and I reached for the wheel hoe instead of my usual stirrup hoe which saved me a lot of time and hassle. A third takeaway was Glen's interest in "different" crops and the way he has tried to find a niche, especially with black beans. It was neat to see how he has worked on building up the infrastructure and market for this crop and it made me think about how I can do this on my own farm with the medicinal and culinary herbs I've been growing.

Inspiration can come when you are least expecting it and stems from the ability to make connections. We need to keep our minds open to what others have to offer. I find that the most successful and interesting people are those willing to share their trade secrets and help out one another, and I am glad I didn't decide to skip out on the organic row crop field day after all.

# Recipes

## Kale Bohemian Style

Nice with pickled beets topped with sour cream

2 Pounds brisket of beef  
4 cups kale  
½ cup uncooked rice  
Cut the meat into 6 portions and refrigerate

2 medium potatoes  
2 onions  
1 teaspoon salt

Wash the kale quickly, tear off the green part of leaves, discard stalks, drain and chop coarsely. Chill. Peel potatoes and cut into pieces, as for French frying. Sliver the onions.

Turn all ingredients into a large heavy kettle, toss so they are well mixed, and simmer, covered, for 1 ½ hours. The juice from the kale will probably provide enough moisture; if it doesn't, add a little water. The dish is ready when the rice is cooked. Serves 6 (Heriteau, 1970)

## Thai Lettuce Wraps

Lettuce (romaine or bibb lettuce)  
Shredded carrot and kohlrabi  
Peas  
Mint  
Cilantro  
Mushrooms (shitake or oyster work great)  
Stir Fry Sauce:

1 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon sesame oil  
4 tablespoons rice wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons liquid aminos  
1 inch fresh grated ginger  
1 teaspoon white pepper  
2 garlic scapes

Prepare vegetables: remove upper half of romaine leaves (the flexible part) and crisp in cold water. Spin or pat dry. Arrange on plate in a stack of 3-4 leaves per person. Reserve romaine hearts for salad or another recipe. Shred carrots and kohlrabi with a grater and arrange on plate next to lettuce. Arrange fresh mint and cilantro leaves on the plate as well.

To make stir fry sauce, combine rice vinegar, grated ginger, minced garlic scape, white pepper, soy sauce or liquid aminos, sesame oil, and a tablespoon of water. Set aside. Slice mushrooms and stir fry in sesame oil. Once softened and cooked through, add peas (cut into 1/3ds with top trimmed) and stir fry another couple minutes. Add sauce and cook until slightly thickened. Arrange on plate with vegetables or serve in a bowl on the side.

To assemble, add to each lettuce leaf some of the mushroom pea stir fry, grated fresh vegetables, fresh herbs, and peanut sauce if desired. Roll and enjoy! From Farmer Sarah's Kitchen

## References

Heriteau, J. (1970). *Grow It and Cook It*. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc.