

This week's share:

Lettuce, carrots, fennel, cabbage or spinach, spring onions, fresh garlic, arugula, braising greens, cilantro, dill, savory



Next week's guess...

Lettuce, spinach, beets, carrots, onions, fresh garlic, fava beans or eggplant, basil, parsley



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 6, July 18, 2011

On the farm...

Simple Fennel and Onion Salad

2 fennel bulbs
2-3 spring onions
2 tsp chopped dill or cilantro
3 Tbsp olive oil
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste

Wash the fennel bulbs well, making sure to get any dirt out from between the layers. Cut bulbs in half down the centre of the wide side and remove core. Using a sharp knife or mandolin, slice the fennel very thinly and place in a bowl. Cut the onions in half and slice very thinly. Add to fennel. Toss in herbs, oil, vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper and toss to coat. Let sit for 15 minutes to allow veggies to marinate slightly. Enjoy!

Hint: Add some grated carrot to the salad for a hint of sweetness and colour or toss with roughly chopped arugula.



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Wheat trials heading up in the field....

and flax flowers blooming!



Perhaps if we were not vegetable farmers, we would find the events depicted in the above photos less amazing - but we are! And so we find the heads of wheat and oats plumping up and the flax flowering and forming seeds in our field to be quite spectacular! These crops and others are growing in the two-acre trial plots of various grains that we have planted in our middle field. They are the outcome of an awesome collaboration between us and our friend Bennet, who is working with us this season.

The three of us all have dreams of growing grain and seeds - Jeff and I for our planned grain, seed and legume CSA and Bennet for his own home-grown bread CSA. And so, we teamed up this summer to try growing various grains and seeds - wheat, oats, barley, flax and more. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement to say the least! Bennet is taking the lead and getting the chance to try his hand at grain growing and to work out the logistics of harvest, cleaning and storage and we get to learn vicariously through him! Not to mention we get an amazing addition to our garden crew.

It's great to have the energies and imaginations of more people on the farm and to get to learn from each other - hopefully we'll be offering up the fruits (or the seeds perhaps) of our labours sometime soon!

Refreshing Fennel!

With summer headed towards August already, there are lots of exciting crops to anticipate in the garden. And while tomatoes, cucumbers and beans are worth waiting for, it is the fennel that truly makes our culinary day here at the farm. Jeff and I fell in love with fennel many years ago and eat it almost every day when it's in season. A native of the Mediterranean - fennel is in the carrot family and is used as a herb (the fronds and seed) and vegetable (the bulb). It is crunchy, and sweet with a mild anise flavour and can be eaten raw in salads (sliced very thinly is nicest) or cooked in any number of ways. We love to roast large chunks or toss them in oil and put them on the barbecue. You can add fennel to pastas for a lovely aromatic flavour or put in stews, gratins or warm salads.

Fresh Garlic

Finally, garlic is back on the menu! After a long winter and spring, these gleaming white beauties are ready to be pulled from the ground and enjoyed. This is *fresh* garlic - pulled straight from the ground and uncured - and so it is a bit different in appearance and texture than the cured garlic we eat most of the time. You will notice that the skin of the bulb and cloves is thick and juicy and that the garlic itself is quite juicy and somewhat mild. But it is garlic all the same and can be used just about everywhere in your cooking. Eventually we will pull all of our garlic from the ground and put them in a cool, dark place to cure. This dries the skin of the garlic forming a protective layer that allows it to store for many, many months.



Arugula Walnut Pesto

2 cups of packed arugula leaves, stems removed
1/2 cup of shelled walnuts
1/2 cup fresh Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
4 garlic clove peeled and minced
1/2 teaspoon salt
Cracked black pepper, to taste
1/2 lemon, squeezed



Over medium high heat, toast the walnuts until fragrant, about three to five minutes.

In a food processor, combine the arugula, salt, walnuts and all the garlic.

Pulse while drizzling in the olive oil.

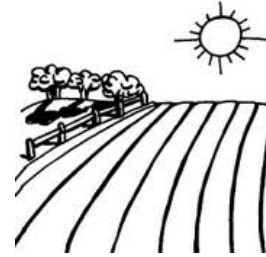
Remove the mixture from the processor and put it into a bowl. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, freshly ground pepper and a big squeeze of lemon, to taste.

Farm Open House!

Saturday, July 23

1-5pm

Please come visit the farm, see the garden and have a cup of iced tea! We'll have a farm tour at 1:30 and again at 3:30pm with a wagon ride to see the mushroom logs in the bush at the back of the farm!



Pan Grilled Polenta with Garlic Braising Greens

Adapted from 'How to Cook Anything Vegetarian'

1/2 cup milk
2 cups water
1 cup medium or coarse cornmeal
Freshly ground black pepper
Salt
Olive oil (a few tablespoons)

Butter a bread loaf pan and set aside. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, add milk, water and a pinch of salt. Bring almost to a boil, stirring to combine.

When liquids are almost boiling, whisk in the cornmeal, whisking constantly to combine and to avoid lumps.

Lower heat to low, bringing mixture to a simmer. Stir constantly until thick (like the thickness of oatmeal when done); around 20 minutes.

Spoon finished polenta into the buttered loaf pan and put into the refrigerator for approximately 30 minutes or until fully cooled. Polenta should be of a thickness allowing you to form into patties or to slice into pieces to pan brown.

Forms thick slices or patties to your preferred size. Brush each side with olive oil and place in the skillet over medium-high heat. Allow to brown on each side and warm in the middle.

Place on a plate and top with greens below. Ingredients:

6 cups braising greens, washed and dried
2 spring onions, sliced
3 cloves garlic, smashed and minced
1-2 tablespoons olive oil

In a heavy frying or sauté pan heat to medium high heat and add the olive oil.

Add onion and garlic and sauté 5 minutes. Add the braising greens in batches. As they begin to wilt and reduce, add more until all the greens are in the pan.

Remove and spoon over the polenta