



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 3, June 25, 2012

This week's share:

Spinach, lettuce mix, turnips, bok choy, peas, chard, mixed greens, garlic scapes, green onions, dill/cilantro

Next week's guess:

Spinach, lettuce, bok choy, cabbage or cauliflower, peas, beets, kale, garlic scapes, herbs

On the farm...

This morning when we went on our weekly field walk to scope out what needs to be done on the farm this week, it was a little difficult not to gasp at the amount of work that we had ahead of us. Not that it was an unusual amount, or an amount that we couldn't tackle but there was one key thing that made the whole thing seem daunting - pea picking! Yes, when we got to the section of field that contains our many beds of peas, we saw that - yikes! - they are all pretty much ripening at once and will need to be picked this week.

Picking peas is probably the most time consuming harvest that we do here. We plant 'em only to harvest a couple times in the spring because we just would not be able to get any other work done if we had to pick peas for longer than that! But luckily, we also got a little boost today that might make this week seem slightly less daunting.

Today at the farm, we had about 9 extra people lending a hand! There are several small-scale organic farms around us, as many of you probably know. Many of them are run by friends of ours and also have interns working and learning there. So, we've started doing group days where all the interns from one farm will go to another to get a tour, learn about their operation and do a group work project. Lucky for us, they were at our farm this Monday! So, with 18 extra hands, we got a whole bunch of work done today - picking peas, weeding carrots and thinning beets. It was a great bonus for us and was also really nice to be able to show these folks around the farm and talk about what we do.

The farms that we collaborate with for this year in doing these farm swaps are Green Being, Farm our neighbours down the road and Saugeen River CSA which is a CSA farm just north of us. It's really great to be able to collaborate with them and learn from what they are doing, not to mention meet a whole bunch of new folks and aspiring farmers. And, we don't mind the extra hands either!

Many pea rows to pick....



Fresh Peas with Cilantro and Mint

serves 4

1/2 lb sugar snap peas – stem ends trimmed and cut in half on the diagonal
3 cups shelled fresh peas 1 tablespoon sea salt for the blanching water
1/4 cup olive oil
4 garlic scapes, finely chopped
1 large handful cilantro, chopped
12 large mint leaves – torn in 1" pieces
1 teaspoon sea salt to taste
freshly ground pepper to taste

Step 1: Fill a large bowl with cold water and several ice cubes.

Step 2: Fill a large heavy-bottomed soup pot with water and bring to a boil. Add the salt and blanch the sweet peas for 2 minutes until tender, but still crunchy. Drain and transfer to the ice water bath until cool. Drain on paper towels and set aside. Repeat with the sugar snap peas.

Step 3: Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil, garlic, cilantro and mint and sauté for 2 minutes until herbs are wilted and garlic pale golden. Add the peas toss well and sauté for an additional 1 minute until warmed through. Add the salt and pepper, toss again and remove from heat.

Transfer to a bowl. Serve warm as a side vegetable or room temperature as an antipasto.



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Baked Spinach and Ricotta Pasta

3/4 pound pasta, your choice
6 garlic scapes, chopped finely
4 cups chopped fresh spinach
Zest and juice of one lemon
8 oz. fresh mozzarella, shredded
1 cup ricotta cheese
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
Fresh Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees, and butter/oil a 13x9 inch oven-safe baking dish. Squeeze 1/2 of lemon juice into baking dish and coat bottom of dish evenly. Prep all ingredients, including thoroughly washing and drying spinach.
2. Cook pasta according to directions, remove from heat and rinse with cold water. Toss in bowl with olive oil and set aside.
3. Heat a bit of olive oil in a skillet and saute garlic and about a teaspoon of salt for a few minutes. Add spinach and cook until spinach collapses, approximately 30 seconds.
4. Remove spinach/garlic from heat and add to noodles with remaining 1/2 of the lemon juice and all of zest. Add a 1/2 cup of ricotta and half of the mozzarella to the mixture extremely well.
5. Pour mixture into baking dish and top with remaining cheese and ricotta (in dollops).
6. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes until cheese on top is bubbling and melted. Top with fresh parmesan and salt and pepper.

Peas Please!

Nothing is more quintessentially spring than peas. Going into the garden to pop the pods off the plants and then into your mouth is an experience that most people have some memory of - usually a fond one. Here at the farm, we've got lots of peas this spring and they seem to be all coming at once. So you may find one of three types in your shares:

Shell Peas

The classic pea - these have dark green pods that you snap open to find the little round gems inside. The shells are tough - it's only the peas inside you want to eat. If you can save some - throw them in pastas, curries or salads for a sweet addition!

Sugar Snap Peas

These are lighter green, plump and juicy. Eat the entire pod for a crunchy, sweet treat. These are also lovely stir-fried or steamed and added to salads, pastas, noodle dishes or just with butter and salt!

Snow Peas

A classic of Chinese cuisine, these thin, green pods are also eaten whole. They are lovely raw but their sweetness really comes out if they are gently steamed or stir-fried. Fry with mushrooms and onions over rice, add to a brothy soup or slice thinly and add to your salads - yum!

Green Cilantro Dressing

1 small bunch cilantro (a good handful), washed well
1/3 cup olive oil
1/4 cup rice or apple cider vinegar
3 garlic scapes, chopped (or 1 clove garlic, chopped)
1 tbsp fresh ginger, chopped
1 tbsp honey
salt and pepper to taste

Combine cilantro (stems, roots and all) and remaining ingredients in a blender. Blend until very smooth. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste. Toss on any mixed fresh salad, potato salad or pasta salad. So yummy!

Swiss Chard with Raisins and Pine Nuts

1 1/2 pounds Swiss chard (preferably rainbow or red; from 2 bunches)
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/3 cup golden raisins
1 cup water
1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted

Tear chard leaves from stems, then coarsely chop stems and leaves separately.

Heat oil in a heavy pot over medium heat, and then sauté onion, stirring occasionally, 1 minute. Add chard stems and cook, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Add raisins and 1/2 cup water and simmer, covered, until stems are softened, about 3 minutes. Add chard leaves and remaining 1/2 cup water and simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until leaves are tender, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Herbs...

Are great! They add flavour, aroma and personality to our meals. In the spring, we are graced by the presence of many herbs - perennials that are coming back such as oregano, thyme and sage - and annual herbs like dill, cilantro and parsley. I encourage you to throw these herbs into your salads, on pasta, with eggs and certainly to flavour meat.

Oregano, sage, thyme, dill and parsley can all be dried if you have more than you can use fresh. If you have a food dehydrator, they take merely an hour or so or you can tie them in a bundle and hang them to dry in your house.

Parsley can be chopped and frozen to store and for cilantro, we puree it with olive oil and freeze it in cubes to use in the winter - just like basil pesto.

Try adding cilantro to salad dressing (my favourite cilantro dressing is in this newsletter), with curries or Thai dishes, in Mexican cuisine (like salsa or guacamole!) - it has a fresh flavour will enliven your meals!



Cilantro