



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 2, June 18, 2012

This week's share:

Spinach, lettuce mix, lettuce, radishes, kohlrabi, bok choy, green onions

Next week's guess:

Lettuce mix, spinach, lettuce, bok choy, kohlrabi, turnips, radishes, broccoli, garlic scapes, peas, herbs

On the farm...

Returning CSA members may be quite familiar already with some of the ins and outs of farming for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA!) program. But some of you who are new to the CSA might wonder what our days look like here on the farm. As CSA farmers, we do all the planning, cultivating, planting, seeding, weeding, harvesting, advertising, administration, delivery and customer service for the farm. This takes a lot of manpower and planning and a lot of knowledge about how to grow organic vegetables to be successful.

Our farm year begins sometime in December when we start planning the garden based on how many CSA shares we will have. This means we predict the contents of each summer and winter share and plan out how much seed and supplies, how much acreage, how much labour we will need for the coming summer. We start all of our own transplants so, come March, the greenhouse is going with baby seedlings getting ready to plant out in May.

In May, our interns arrive and we start planting. This leads to lots of weeding with tractor, hoes and occasionally hands, which in turn leads to lots of harvesting, washing and delivery of your CSA shares.

Part of the planning means knowing a lot about what each of our crops needs. How long does it take to grow? How much fertility does it need? What pests or diseases is it susceptible to and how do we prevent them? Having an organic vegetable garden means planning a long term crop rotation where crops are rotated around different plots on the farm (and interspersed with soil-building cover crops) in an effort to maintain soil health, reduce pest and disease pressure and grow the healthiest crops possible. It's a lot of work but it's the best kind and has the tastiest result!

It's hard to see but the photo below exemplifies part of how we build a crop rotation by planting crops in separate blocks depending on what family they belong to and by the timing of when they are planted and harvested.



Up here is a spring wheat crop

Over here is our "early cabbage family" crop block (these crops are fertility hogs)

And down here is our "early light feeders" crop block (these are crops that use relatively less fertility)

Stir-Fried Bok Choy and Spinach with Tofu

- 3 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce, divided
- 4 teaspoons Asian sesame oil, divided
- 3 1/2 teaspoons unseasoned rice vinegar, divided
- 1 14- to 16-ounce container extra-firm tofu, drained
- 2 tablespoons peanut oil
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped peeled fresh ginger
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 baby bok choy, leaves separated
- 1/2 lb spinach

Whisk 2 tablespoons soy sauce, 2 teaspoons sesame oil, and 1/2 teaspoon vinegar in bowl.

Stack 2 paper towels on work surface. Cut tofu crosswise into 3/4-inch-thick slices; cut each slice crosswise in half. Arrange tofu on paper towels and let stand 10 minutes. Pat top of tofu dry.

Heat peanut oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add tofu and cook, without moving, until golden brown on bottom, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer tofu to paper towel to drain, then place tofu on sheet of foil and brush both sides with soy sauce mixture.

Wipe out any peanut oil from skillet. Add 2 teaspoons sesame oil and place skillet over medium heat. Add green onions, ginger, and garlic. Stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce and 3 teaspoons vinegar, then bok choy. Toss until bok choy wilts, 1 to 2 minutes. Add spinach in 2 batches, tossing



to wilt before adding more, 1 to 2 minutes per batch. Season greens with salt and pepper. Add tofu to skillet. Toss gently to blend. Transfer to platter.

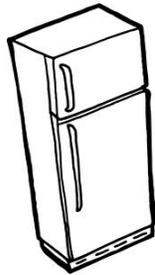
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Veggie Storage 101

Thank goodness that spring has come again and fresh vegetables are back on the table! As CSA members, you get the freshest produce around - we harvest all of your CSA veggies on the day that you pick them up. With such freshness at your fingertips, you want to make sure that you store your vegetables properly so that they stay that fresh all week long. We'll give you storage tips as the season goes on so that you know how to best store every type of veggie.

In early spring, it's all about cold and moist. Greens like spinach, kale, chard and lettuce as well as radish, turnip, kohlrabi and green onions need to be kept as cold as possible and covered to prevent them from drying out. Make sure to keep all these things in your fridge in a bag or container and they will keep well for many days!



Spinach and Apple Salad

Servings: 4

For the salad dressing:

1/4 cup minced sweet onion
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
3 tablespoons white vinegar
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
Pinch paprika
3 tablespoons sugar, divided
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste

For the buttered almonds:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
3/4 cup sliced almonds
For the salad:

1/2 lb spinach, washed
2 medium apples (variety of your choice), cored, quartered, and thinly sliced
Feta or goat cheese, optional

1. For the salad dressing: In a medium-sized bowl, combine the onion, vinegars, sesame seeds, and paprika. Mix well.
2. Add the 2 tablespoons of the sugar to the mixture and mix until combined.
3. Whisking constantly, slowly drizzle the olive oil into the mixture.
4. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Set aside.
5. For the buttered almonds: In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter.
6. Add the almonds and cook, stirring constantly, until the almonds are lightly browned and fragrant, about a minute or so.
7. Add the remaining tablespoon of sugar to the almonds and gently toss to coat.
8. Continue to cook until the sugar melts, about 1-2 minutes more.
9. Remove the almonds from the heat and set aside to cool.
10. Assemble the salad as desired, and drizzle with salad dressing.

Bok Choy

Hmm, bok choy. We started growing this delightful vegetable (in the cabbage family) several years ago. Common in Chinese cuisine, bok choy is wonderful for many reasons. It grows fast and under many conditions, can be harvested from baby to full size (so for many weeks) and is absolutely delicious, versatile and highly nutritious. Baby bok choy is particularly nice because it is very tender and flavourful. A lovely stir-fry green, bok choy cooks quickly and can be thrown in at the end of cooking for stir-fries, soups, noodle dishes and salads. Try quickly stir-frying bok choy with green onion and kohlrabi for a simple and delicious meal over rice!



Kohlrabi Al Olio

1 medium kohlrabi
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. butter
1/2 tsp. garlic
grated Parmesan cheese (to taste)
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste



Grate kohlrabi and squeeze liquid out with a towel. Heat olive oil, butter and garlic in a pan. Add kohlrabi and saute. Add salt and pepper. Just before finished sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

Braised Bok Choy

1/2 lb bok choy
2 tsp dark soy sauce
1 tsp brown sugar
2 tsp oil
1/2 cup water
1/4 tsp salt, or to taste

Soak whole pieces of bok choy in sink with sufficient water for about half an hour to get dirt from between leaves. Half each bok choy lengthwise, drain in a colander. Mix water, dark soy sauce, sugar and oil in a pot or wok. Bring it to the boil over medium heat. Put halved bok choy in the boiling sauce, with stalks touching the sauce. Slightly press down the vegetable if required. Cover. Turn to low flame and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes. Add salt to taste and mix well. Dish up, with or without sauce, and serve hot.

Garlic what?!

This week, we begin harvesting the curly, crunchy flower stalks of the garlic plant known as "garlic scapes." Pick ing these as they sprout from the centre of our garlic plants encourages the plants to put energy into growing a nice, juicy bulb. But, they are also delicious! They have a mild, tangy garlic flavour and can be used raw (like in the wonderful garlic scape pesto - great on pizza) or cooked - thrown into a stir-fry, put into pasta sauce or added to an omelette. You will find these in your shares this week and/or next. Give them a shot!

