



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 5, July 13, 2013

Last week I gave you a brief description of how we harvest the veggies that make up your CSA shares. I gave you just an overview but one thing that you may have gleaned is that it is very labour intensive. Even the biggest vegetable farms use a lot of manual labour to get crops in the ground, weeded and harvested. That intensive physical work that vegetables require is part of the reason that we've started branching out on the farm and started to grow grain. Truly, it's only a small part of the reason but last week we had our first grain harvests (of hard and soft wheat) and it was pretty amazing to be able to go out to the field with the combine and pull in a couple of thousand pounds of food within a few hours (with almost no bending over!)

Many of you have probably heard a little about our grain project and we're quite excited about it this year because we are finally hoping to be able to offer grain CSA shares come this winter. Jeff and I worked on a farm in Northern California a few years ago that grew diverse grains for monthly shares of flour, whole grain, legumes, seeds and more and we absolutely loved it! Locally produce, freshly harvested grain is not given much attention in the local food movement but since we started growing grain trials (and subsequently eating our own grain) a couple of years ago, we've truly seen and tasted the difference that fresh, local grain makes.

This year we have about 9 acres of diverse grains in the ground. We're growing oats, barley, wheat for bread and pastry, spelt, corn for cornmeal, grits and hominy, dried beans, flax, poppy seeds and rye. Over the past couple of years, we've acquired various equipment necessary for growing, cleaning and processing grain (we still need to buy a good flour mill) and we've been taking the time to learn how to use it. It's been a steep learning curve to say the least. There is tons to know about growing grain and even more to know about processing it. What moisture level should it be at for storage? How do you clean it so that you remove all the chaff, tiny rocks and weed seeds? How do you mill it?!?! It's an amazing art to learn and we are slowly making headway and in the process have been eating a lot of delicious grain. Freshly milled flour tastes sweet and complex. Whole barley is nutty and rich and our own cornmeal has an amazing corn flavour. Not to mention how good it feels to eat a meal made up of only things grown on our own farm.

We plan to offer monthly shares come January of flour and whole grains, seeds, rolled oats, cornmeal and more. Many of you have already told us you are interested in a share. If you haven't already, let us know and we will be sure to get you more information as it comes.



This week's share:

Lettuce, chard, spring onions, carrots, cauliflower, fava beans, komatsuna, zucchini, kohlrabi, herbs

Next week's guess:

Lettuce, kale, fennel, fava beans, zucchini, sweet onions, cucumber, arugula, new potatoes, herbs

Tagliatelle with Fava Beans, Zucchini and Basil

A Cedar Down Farm recipe

Serves 4

15 to 20 fava beans
1 medium zucchini, cut into half moons
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large handful of basil, chopped
2 tbsp butter
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup shaved Parmigiano cheese
2 cups Tagliatelle pasta or any other shape of pasta
salt and pepper

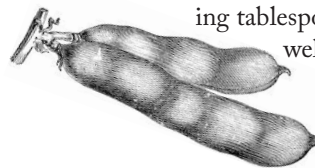
Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. When boiling add pasta and cook until tender but not mushy.

While water is coming to a boil, remove fava beans from pods and place in a small pot in about 2 inches of water. Bring to a boil and steam for about 5 minutes or until favas are tender. Remove from water. Score the skin of the fava beans and squeeze out the beans from their skin. Place in a medium bowl.

Heat a medium skillet and add about 2 tbsp of olive oil. When hot, add zucchini and salt to taste and fry until golden on both sides, about 12 minutes. Add to bowl with fava beans.

Add garlic and basil to favas and zucchini and when pasta is ready add it to the bowl.

Add the cheese, butter and remaining tablespoon of olive oil as well as salt and pepper to taste.
Serve hot!



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Fava Bean Fantastic!

Fava beans are one of those interesting crops that are used extensively in many cuisines around the world and yet are relatively unknown to many people here. An unfortunate thing for us because these big, beautiful beans are extremely delicious and add much in the way of flavour, texture and beauty to many dishes. Fava beans are prepared in many ways in many different places around the world - from North Africa and the Middle East to China, Portugal and South America. They can be used fresh or dried and appear in diverse dishes.

One thing is certain though - in their fresh, green state, fava beans are silky in texture, sweet, nutty and fresh tasting. I add them to everything from pasta dishes to potato salads, puréed fresh in a fava bean hummous or sautéed on their own with garlic and basil or other herbs.

To use the fresh favas, remove the big beans from their cushiony pods and steam them until they are just tender. You will see that the beans themselves are enrobed in a white-ish skin. Once they are steamed you can puncture the skin and squeeze the green beans out. Then add them to whatever dish you are making. It's true, they take a bit of work what with needing to be podded and then skinned but you will see that they are well worth the effort!



Warm Fava Bean Salad with Basil and Pancetta

Adapted from www.culinate.com

For a vegetarian version, this salad is great without the pancetta

3 Tbsp. olive oil
3 oz. pancetta, chopped into bits
3 cups fava beans, shelled, blanched, and peeled (see above for method)
A generous handful of basil, minced
Salt to taste

In a large sauté pan or cast-iron skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the pancetta and cook until crisp, stirring often. Before the oil starts to smoke, add the blanched fava beans and cook briefly, to heat them through, stirring frequently so they don't brown. Turn off the heat and stir in the mint and salt to taste. Serve immediately

Chard Stems with Sesame-Yogurt Sauce and Black Sesame Seeds

From "Vegetable Literacy" by Deborah Madison

Serves 2 to 4

This dish is great if you've used your chard greens up in something else. But, you can also make it with leaves and stems

Stems from 12 or more chard leaves

Sea salt
1 tsp or so olive oil
1 large clove garlic, halved
1 tbsp tahini
1/3 cup thick yogurt
2 tsp black sesame seeds
1 lemon, quartered

Trim the ends then cut the stems into 4 inch lengths. Bring a shallow skillet of water to a boil. Add 1 tsp or so salt, the oil, half the garlic clove, and the chard stems and simmer until the stems are tender. The best way to find out if they are ready is to remove a piece, slice into it and take a bite. It can take as little as 4 or 5 minutes or somewhat longer depending on the size and age of the stems. Remove them to a colander.

To make the sauce, pound the remaining half garlic clove with 1/4 tsp salt until smooth. Add the tahini and yogurt and work together to form a smooth sauce. Toast the sesame seeds in a small skillet over medium heat until fragrant, after several minutes, then pour them onto a plate to cool.

Loosely arrange the chard stems and leaves on a plate. Drizzle with the sauce and arrange lemon wedges around to be put onto each plate. Finish with the sesame seeds. Serve chilled or at room temperature.



Fava Bean Hummous with Cumin

From "Vegetable Literacy" by Deborah Madison

1/2 cup shelled fava beans
1 small clove garlic, chopped
1/2 tsp ground cumin
2 tbsp olive oil plus more for drizzling
Sea salt
Fresh lemon juice

Bring a small pot of water to boil. Immerse the beans into the boiling water for 1 minute, drain, and refresh in a bowl of cool water. Pinch the skin off each bean. Put the skinned fava beans a food processor and add the garlic, cumin, oil and 1/4 tsp salt. Pulse until the beans are roughly puréed. Taste for salt. Add the lemon juice, starting with 1 teaspoon and working up from there. Scrape the purée into a bowl. Just before serving, drizzle oil over the surface and add a sprinkle of toasted cumin seeds.