

Dear Member,

The beginning of the CSA season is always a rather stressful time on the farm. We keep very detailed notes each year so we can plan our planting dates, amounts to be planted, varieties that grew well and members liked in previous years. And then we just get on the roller coaster and let Mother Nature take us from there. This year the weather has been so cold and so very wet that many of the early crops are slow to mature. The lettuces are really doing well in this weather and finally the Oriental greens are getting a bit of size. During this week the sun did shine a couple of days and today, Sunday, it is very warm.

With the warmth we finally were able to remove the row cover from the summer squash and cucumber plants so that the bees can pollinate the plants as soon they start to flower. Summer squash and cucumbers are still a couple of weeks away, but it was very hopeful to see how well they are growing. We put row cover over the plants when we transplant them to keep the Cucumber Beetles from being able to destroy the young plants. It is a light weight woven fabric that works to keep the plants a bit warmer, but more importantly, keeps the insects from the plants.

Our very faithful garlic is growing well and you will have Garlic Scapes, the top portion of the plant, in your share this week. The scape is the seed head that emerges from the plant. The seeds are seldom used to propagate the garlic as they take years and years to reach a useable size. The scape also takes energy from the plant and the bulbs are a bit smaller if the scapes are not removed. To use the scape just remove the very pointed end and chop up the rest of the scape. They can be used just like garlic and have the flavor of garlic. A member last year said that they made pesto from the scapes and I think I'm going to give that a try this year. Enjoy the vegetables -Pete and Deb

Shares Include: Sorrel-1 bunch-*this is a lemony flavored green that is great added to chicken soup or chopped very fine and added to a salad. A recipe for Sorrel Chicken follows.* Garlic Scapes-7 Bok Choi-1 bunch Tatsoi-1 bunch-*an Oriental green. Good chopped and used in stir fry with Bok Choi, or chopped and added to a salad.* Red Leaf Lettuce-1 head Buttercrunch Lettuce-1 head Romaine-1 head Oregano-1 bunch Ancho Peppers-4

What are Ancho Peppers- *these are peppers that we grew last season and dried over the winter in the greenhouse. They are a traditional Mexican pepper that is mildly hot. To use, take the top off and remove the seeds. CAUTION The seeds and the pepper are a bit hot so don't touch your eyes with out washing your hands well. Crush or tear into small pieces and add to almost anything you are cooking for a great flavor. You can also re-constitute the peppers and make a chili sauce. Add water to a pot and simmer the cleaned peppers until soft. Using a blender and a bit of the water, blend until smooth. The color is beautiful and the sauce can be added to almost anything you are cooking or used alone if you like a spicy dipping sauce.*

Cream of Sorrel Soup This rich and sophisticated soup is incredibly delicious hot or cold.

½ pound fresh sorrel leaves (about 2 large handfuls)

4 Tbsp butter

4 shallots or 1 small onion, minced

Wash sorrel. Shred it finely, discarding the bitter center stems. Heat butter in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and sauté for 3 min. Add sorrel and sauté, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes, or until wilted. Add broth, salt, pepper and bring to a boil; simmer for 15 min. Add the cream and heat for 1-2 min (do NOT boil). Serve hot, garnished with minced sorrel. (To serve cold, chill after adding the cream).

OREGANO is one of the distinctive flavors of Italian cuisine. It can be used to season sauces, grilled meats, vegetables, and breads. Oregano blends well with other herbs such as marjoram and thyme. **Dry your own fresh oregano.** If you have an excess of fresh oregano, you can dry it by tying the stems together and hanging it in a warm, dry, well-ventilated place. Oregano dried at its peak will likely have more flavour than supermarket varieties, which can vary in age. I store my homemade dry oregano *en branche*, as the French say, in a paper bag in a dark place, and crumble the leaves off the branches as I need them. Storing the whole branches helps keep the volatile oils intact.

Sorrel Chicken

4-5 pound stewing chicken 1/3 cup diced celery

2 chicken bouillon cubes 2 tsp. salt

1/3 tsp. pepper 1/2 cup sorrel, washed and finely shredded

6 small new potatoes 1 package frozen peas, use fresh if available

1/4 cup cornstarch

Cut chicken in serving pieces. Place in large kettle and cover with water. Add all ingredients except potatoes, peas and cornstarch. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until chicken is tender. Remove chicken from kettle and bone. Add potatoes to broth and cook until almost done. Add peas and boned chicken and cook 5-8 minutes. Add cold milk to 1/4 cup cornstarch

LETTUCE AND OTHER GREENS: Remember to wrap greens in a paper towel and put in perforated plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Lettuce is supposed to last for only a few days, but we usually find that CSA lettuce is still great at the end of the week. Wash well in lots of cool water to remove grit. Lettuce can be lightly braised, stir fried, or sautéed, but remove it from pan after 15-30 seconds. Dress at the last minutes, or greens will become soggy.

Tatsoi is a Chinese green with the appearance and texture of spinach, and a flavor similar to mustard greens. It makes an excellent addition to stir-fries or as a flavoring to fish.

Secrets to Successful Stir-Frying

- 1) Do not cook more dishes than you can handle.
- 2) Prepare all ingred. before you start to cook which means marinate meat pieces, cut vegetables, measure ingredients, prepare sauce mixture
- 3) Read the recipe and assemble ingredients in the order in which they are to be added to the wok. Ingredients such as eggplant, mushrooms and fish tend to absorb more oil and may require slightly more oil for cooking.
- 4) If done properly stir-frying is a very nutritious cooking method. Most stir-fry recipes require only one to two tablespoons of oil and if cooked quickly over high heat should not require more. If your stir-fry does require more liquid add a small amount of water or stock to complete the cooking. Although this is not a strict stir-frying practice it will keep your stir-fry low in fat.
- 5) Heat canola oil before adding ingredients.
- 6) Blanching vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and asparagus before stir-frying ensures quick and even cooking. Grated carrot cooks much quicker than sliced carrot.
- 7) One tsp. of cornstarch combine with a bit of water at the end of cooking thickens the sauce & gives a glossy appearance to the vegetables.

GARLIC SCAPES are very much like garlic, but much milder, and easier to use; it can be chopped into salads, sautéed briefly with other herbs, or used in salad dressing. You get the garlic taste without its harshness, so it can be eaten raw, which is especially useful in salad dressings. Use whenever garlic is called for.

BASICS Start with these basic techniques:

Steaming: Cooking vegetables over –not in– boiling water. If you don't own a steamer basket, consider buying one; they cost only a few dollars. Boil water, place steamer basket over it, place chopped vegetables in basket, cover, and steam for 5 minutes or two. Greens are great cooked this way; season with a little soy sauce, lemon, or butter.

Saute, also called pan-frying; Toss vegetables in a frying Pan to expose all their sides to the heat of the pan and the cooking oil. Starchy vegetables, such as potatoes or winter squash, can be sautéed in butter (preferably clarified) or oil. Keep the heat high at first to form a crust; then reduce heat to give the vegetables time to absorb sealed in moisture and soften; then raise heat again to brown. Salt and pepper just before serving. For moist vegetables, such as greens, tomatoes summer squash and eggplant, sauté in oil only. Slice vegetables ¼ inch thick, toss in flour, and sauté, keeping the heat high. Carrots, turnips, cauliflower, and broccoli should be blanched (throw in a pot of boiling water for 3-4 min. then drain and rinse in cold water) before sautéing.

Stir Frying: Stir vegetables in hot oil as you fry them. Woks are made for this purpose, but you can also stir-fry in a heavy skillet. Make sure the pan is well-coated with oil; pour oil around rim, let it run to the bottom and turn to coat the whole pan. Have veggies ready and cook the ones that need the longest time first. If you are adding herbs or sauce do so at the last minute. Greens can be stir fried in 30-45 seconds; snow peas peppers, and tomatoes take a minute, zucchini takes 2 min, eggplant takes 3-4min.

BOK CHOY (Chinese White Cabbage) Bok choy is a Versatile vegetable that may be stir fried, sautéed, braised, or boiled in soups. It is rich in vitamin C and contains significant amts. of nitrogen compounds known as indoles, which appear to lower the risk of various cancers. Bok choy is also a good source of folic acid. And with its deep green Leaves, bok choy has more beta-carotene than other cabbage & supplies considerably more calcium. Bok choy stalks are mild and crunchy and the leaves pleasantly tangy; it's like getting two vegetables for the price of one. Give the stems a Minute or two to cook before you put the leaves in so that each part cooks to perfection.

BASIC STIR-FRY WITH PEANUT OIL AND GARLIC
Cut stems into 1 inch pieces and slice leaves coarsely. Heat a wok or skillet; add 2 tbsp. peanut oil. Add stems and toss Over moderately-high heat until somewhat softened, about 2 min. Add 1 tsp minced garlic, salt, and soy sauce to taste (1tsp sugar optional)

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Recipes: If you can supply recipes email Nicole at nscartalemi@aol.com. We would love to have some.

GLORIOUS GREENS

Green is associated with spring, time of renewal, refreshing, vital energy. In oriental medicine green is related to liver, emotional stability, creativity. Nutritionally, greens are very high in calcium, 120 -190 mg per cup. They're also high in magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, zinc, and a power house for Vitamin A, C, E and K. They are also crammed high with fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll and many other micro-nutrients and phyto-chemicals. Some of the benefits from eating dark leafy greens are:

<i>-blood purifier</i>	<i>cancer prevention</i>	<i>immune strengthener</i>	<i>promotes healthy intestinal flora</i>	<i>improves circulation</i>
<i>improves liver, gall bladder and kidney function</i>		<i>lifts the spirit, fights depression</i>	<i>clears congestion, especially in lungs, reduces mucus</i>	

Experiment with a variety of cooking methods like steam, boil, sauté, water sauté, pressed salad, or waterless cooking. Boiling makes greens plump and relaxed. Drink the cooking water as a broth or a tea. Steaming makes greens more fibrous and tight; great for people trying to lose weight. Of course raw salad is also good, but not all the time. Heating the greens helps soften the cell walls making the nutrients more available for your body to absorb. Make plenty at a time. Green vegetables are the food most missing in modern diets. It helps build your internal rain forest and strengthen blood and respiratory systems.

Top greens with a squeeze of lemon, some flax seed oil or your favorite salad dressing. Add some grated carrots or grated radish for extra color and flavor. For extra flavor and warmth, sauté with a teaspoon of sesame oil or olive oil after cooking. This is especially in the cold winter months. Eat half the greens at this meal. Save the rest for your next meal, by running it under cold water to stop the cooking process. This will maintain freshness, so the vegetables don't turn brown.