



Big Leaf Farm Newsletter Week #16 September 13 – 19

Farm News

Life is good here on the farm. Summer crops are definitely winding down and winter vegetables are growing like mad. Our winter field is a mass of green – that green-gray color that is indicative of healthy brassica crops. We're enjoying a time in which crops grow easily with little pest pressure. The kale and Brussels sprouts beds are especially verdant, and broccoli and cauliflower that were planted a little later are just now reaching that stage of very rapid growth in which they seem to get bigger as we watch them! We're especially excited about winter squash – we've been tasting a few of the varieties we are less familiar with and are pleasantly surprised at their tastiness. You'll see them in your share once they finish curing in a few weeks.

We've been sowing the last of the winter crops this week- arugula, asian mustards such as pac choi for salad mixes, spinach, and a european green called mache (also known as 'corn salad'. Mache is very time consuming to harvest because it is a small plant that grows close to the ground, but we are trying it in CSA quantities



Mache seeds before they get tucked in.

tasty and to see what people think of this unusual green.

We hope that you have time to get out and enjoy these last days of summer. Have a great week!

because it is exceptionally



Greens for mixed baby salad greens

Cast of characters

- **Summer squash:** Summer squash are starting to wind down. We probably only have a week or two left, so enjoy them while you can.
- **Lettuce:** This week's selection is a red leaf lettuce called 'Mascara'. You saw it in your share earlier in the summer. It grows a nice big leafy head, perfect for large mixed salads.
- **Carrots:**
- **Green beans:** These may well be the last of the green beans. They are really slowing down with the reduced amount of sunlight, so there aren't as many as in previous weeks.
- **Tomatoes:** The reduced number of tomatoes in your share indicate the change in the season. We're still hoping to get more, but we've got some green-tomato recipes at the ready just in case!
- **Potatoes:** Here are the first of the fall storage potatoes. These white beauties are called 'Carola'. They're rinsed but not washed, so treat them accordingly. If you don't use them quickly put them in a cool *dark* place, but not in the refrigerator. They'll store for several months that way.
- **Sweet Peppers:** Peppers are still going strong.
- **Swiss Chard**
- **Scallions**
- **Basil:** We tried a new basil variety this year and it was a flop. We've had enough to give out a few times in small amounts, but never enough for pesto-making. Here's a last small taste of summer - you can use it as a fresh herb. Don't store it in the fridge, the cold temperature damages it. It's best kept as a floral arrangement in a vase of water until you use it.
- **Red Onions:** These are the first of the storage onions. This red variety is called 'Mercury'.

Sicilian Summer Salad

We had forgotten this recipe and just came across it in our files. Fortunately we had everything on hand to prepare it on the spot (we're anchovy lovers through and through), although it's so good that it is worth a trip to the store. It would be good missing one or two ingredients, but this recipe really zings with everything included. Don't be afraid to try this one even if you aren't crazy about anchovies. We forgot where we got this recipe from; perhaps it's from one of the Moosenwood cookbooks.

1 lb boiling potatoes
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ - 1 lb green beans, cut into 2" lengths and cooked.
1 large tomato seeded and diced
6 anchovy fillets, coarsely chopped
12-15 green or black olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
1 T capers, rinsed and drained. If they are the large capers, you might lightly chop them.
1 medium red onion, halved and then thinly sliced
1 t dried oregano, or 2 T fresh basil
~ 1 T fresh lemon juice (best) or bottled
2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced

Peel the potatoes and slice into ¼" pieces. Bring a large pan of water to a boil and drop in the slices and boil rapidly until just tender, ~ 5-8 minutes. You can add the green beans to the potato water for the last 2-3 minutes, or cook them separately until slightly tender. While the potatoes cook, mix the olive oil with 1 t salt in a salad bowl. Drain the potatoes and rinse with cold water until they are cool to the touch. Then add them to the bowl and stir until coated with the oil. Add the tomato, anchovies, capers, onion, oregano or basil and lemon juice and mix. Adjust the seasoning as necessary, and then distribute the egg slices over the top of the salad. Set aside in the fridge for 5-30 minutes and allow the flavors to meld. You can also refrigerate over night. We find that this tastes better the second day.

Bulgur Wheat with scallions and mushrooms

Here's a nice simple side dish calling for the whole scallion. If you aren't familiar with bulgur, give this recipe a try, it's really quite nice. This recipe calls for cooking the grain differently than if you were preparing tabouli.

4 T vegetable oil
2-4 scallions, trimmed and sliced in fine half rings (including greens)
6 medium-sized mushrooms, wiped with a damp cloth and sliced.
2 cups medium or coarse-grained bulgar wheat.
1 ¼ t salt

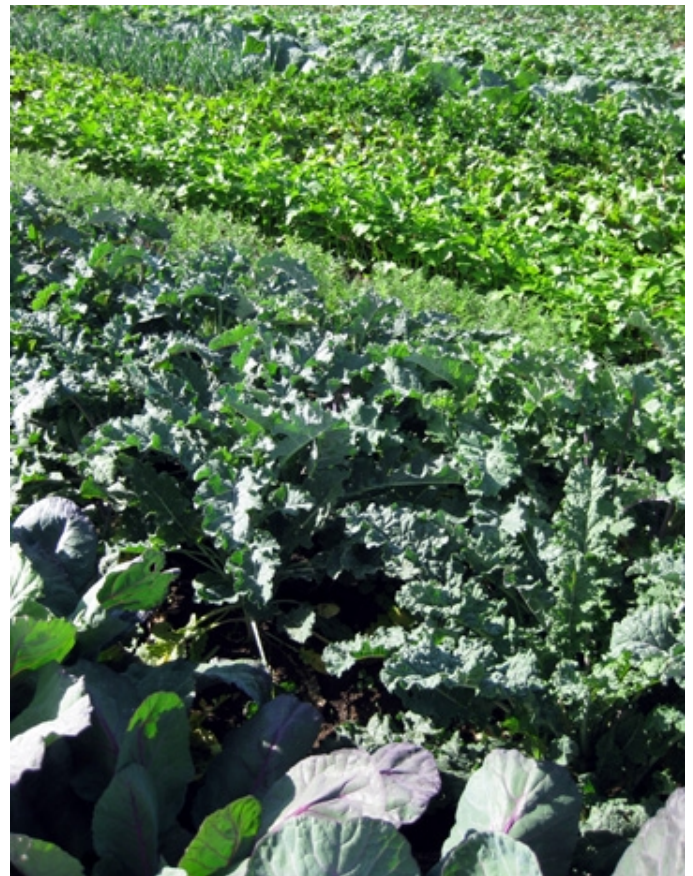
Heat the oil in a heavy pot over medium heat and add the scallion, sautéing for 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms and sauté for another minute, and then add the bulgur and the salt. Stir and cook for another minute until the grains are coated with oil and add 2 ½ cups of water and bring to a boil. Cover, turn to low, and gently simmer for 25 minutes, then turn off the heat. Put a dish towel between the lid and the pot (do this quickly so you don't dissipate the heat). Leave the pot in a warm place for another 20 minutes and the wheat will puff up and not turn soggy.
From "Madhur Jaffrey's world of the east vegetarian cooking".

Spinach or Chard, Catalan Style

2 bunches of spinach or 1 large bunch chard, stems removed and leaves lightly blanched
2 T olive oil
1 large garlic clove, sliced
1/3 cup dark or golden raisins
1/3 cup pine nuts
salt and pepper to taste

Coarsely chop the blanched greens. Warm the oil in a heavy skillet and brown the garlic until golden. Remove it from the pan, then add the raisins and pine nuts and cook until the raisins are plump and nuts are golden. Add the greens and cook until they are heated through.

From Deborah Madison's 'Vegetarian cooking for everyone'



Winter crops are sizing up nicely. The beds are (front to back), Brussels sprouts, kale, carrots, beets, celery and leeks, and cabbages.