



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 2, March 23rd and 24th, 2016

Pest Control on Our Farm, by Steve Pedersen & Jeanne Byrne

We recently received a question about what “organic pesticides” we apply to our crops. Certain microbial, botanical, or mineral substances are approved for pest control in organic agriculture and we occasionally use one to address a specific situation on the farm. However, we rarely use even these organic pest control products. We manage our farmland with the intent to create a balanced system with natural pest and disease control provided by natural predators, crop rotation, and the ability of healthy plants to withstand some pest pressure.

We rely heavily on insectary plantings. Our home farm is almost completely surrounded by native, insectary hedgerows that we have planted over the years. These provide habitat for lacewings, ladybugs, syrphid flies, spiders, damselflies, and myriad tiny parasitic wasps that all feed on pest species. We also use annual insectary plants, like alyssum, that we interplant with our vegetable crops. On strawberries we release predatory mites (*persimilis*) on a regular basis to combat two spotted mites. We use barrier fabrics (floating row covers) to exclude flea and cucumber beetles on cruciferous greens and squash as well as to keep cabbage maggots away from susceptible root crops like turnips and radishes. Before planting carrots we incorporate mustard seed meal in the soil to combat nematodes.

Crop rotation is critical for managing soil borne diseases. Our strawberries are on a five-year rotation and most of the vegetable crops are rotated between crop families on an annual basis. Pests and soil-borne diseases tend to favor particular crops, so rotating crops breaks the cycle and can keep outbreaks from occurring.

Unfortunately, we live in an area with lots of other farms and, despite our best efforts, pests like cabbage aphids don't respect boundaries. When we spray, we do so as a last resort, and we use the safest materials available. We avoid broad spectrum organic insecticides, like spinosad or neem, because of their risk to beneficial insects. Last year the only applications we did were sulfur for powdery mildew on a late block of squash and cucumbers, and M-Pede (Safer's Soap) on broccoli and cauliflower early in the year for cabbage aphids. Our strawberries, blueberries, and the rest of our vegetable crops received no application of any pest control substance.

Farming is never straightforward or easy and pest pressures change from year to year. We do what we can to maintain a balanced and healthy organic system that can withstand most of these challenges. We appreciate your support for farming the way we do.

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

This week, we will be offering some fresh, green spring delights from our farm. Those cute **Little Gems**, for one, bringing salad to the plate again after a brief hiatus in the last few winter boxes.

If you are new to the CSA, you might meet **mustard greens** with a blank chartreuse stare, but don't be intimidated by their bountiful, light green ruffles. Their use in the kitchen is quite diverse. While I may not make an entire salad out of mustard greens, adding a bit to your salad will kick it up a notch with its peppery bite (more of a horseradishy bite). Or, you could steam or sauté them with your **spring onions** and **oyster mushrooms**. **Mustard greens** are your leafy multivitamin, packed with tons of Vitamins K, A, C, E, and B1-6, copper, manganese, calcium, phosphorus, iron, potassium, magnesium, folate, etc.

Fennel will bring forth a hint o' licorice to your plate. Slice it thin for your salads, or chunk it up with your roast.

Italian parsley will be your culinary herb of the week. Accent your spring flavors with it in a dressing or topping.

Red spring onions are my favorite thing to "quickle", not only for the attractive shade of pink they end up, but for the tangy sweetness they bring to sandwiches, salads and beyond.

Golden beets have all the lusciousness of a red beet, without the "bloody" mess. It's a win-win!

Broccoli is a power vegetable for kids, and why not? It looks like trees and all the vitamins are cleverly hidden.

Last, but not least, an extra special treat from Far West Fungi, **oyster mushrooms!** Oysters are delicate and tender; you can actually tear them instead of cutting them! Also, they cook fast, so they are a great

last-minute addition to a quick stir-fry.

Cooking Notes, by Andrew Cohen

Golden beets have that earthiness, yet are sweeter and not quite as “dirty” tasting as red beets seem to be. I know many people who find red beets off-putting, but they will eat golden beets, and even like them sometimes. **Fennel** enjoys some of the same fan base as well, which is compounded by its dual nature-the cooked and the raw. Or even nearly raw as it appears in the French Lentil dish in this week's offering of

This Week

Little Gem Letuce

Mustard Greens

Fennel

Italian Parsley

Red Spring Onions*

Loose Golden Beets*

Broccoli OR Brocolini*

Oyster Mushrooms*

Everything is certified organic. Onions, beets, and broccoli are from Coke Farm. Mushrooms are from Far West Fungi. All other vegetables were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

dishes. The **fennel** and **red spring onions** are both cooked to a soft and flavorful goo, and also just cooked to add flavor at the end of the cooking time. The **red spring onions** can be used whole, roasted, grilled, and chopped and sautéed. They can be quickled pickled as well (see recipes on website). They are great for sauces (See Pork Chops with Scallion Sauce on website), and go well with eggs and **mushrooms**. They can be treated like calçots also (see **Spring Onions Cooked Like Calçots**, and **Salsa Romesco**, on site). They pair wonderfully with asparagus on the grill, too, or in scrambled eggs. Most recipes I see for **oyster mushrooms** call for babying them along, but I like to get them crisp and golden. I feel this brings out a nutty quality as well making them taste less slippery than light cooking. This technique is great for pairing with **golden beets**, as in **Roasted Golden Beets with Crisp Sautéed Oyster Mushrooms and Red Spring Onions** offered this week. Another use for these mushrooms would be **Grilled Little Gem Lettuces Dressed with Oyster Mushroom, Spring Onion, Broccoli Hash**. While the mushrooms sauté, the chopped broccoli florets are blanched just enough that they are no longer raw. They are then added to the mushrooms and sautéed with the onions. Then they are tossed in a little olive oil lemon juice vinaigrette and used to top grilled wedges of Little Gems. You could also shred the **mushrooms** and roast them with florets of **broccoli**. Hit with lemon oil and then either add to pasta or use as a topping for crostini or even pizza. And just remember, **broccoli** has more vitamin C than oranges, so eat it up.

Note: We can't print them all, but Chef Andrew's recipes are always available in full at highgroundorganics.com.

Roasted Golden Beets with Crisp Sautéed Oyster Mushrooms and Red Spring Onions Dressed in White Balsamic Dressing, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch gold beets, roasted and dressed with white balsamic vinegar, and cut into 1/2-inch wedges (see Roasted Beets recipe on website)	2-3 cups (1/2-3/4 pound) oyster mushrooms, base trimmed away, separated, and larger ones torn lengthwise into thick-ish shreds
4 red spring onions, greens removed and reserved for another use, diagonally sliced 1/8th -inch thin	Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup dry white wine	Grape seed (or other neutral flavored) oil as needed
1/2 tsp. fresh thyme, chopped	1 cup White Balsamic Parsley Dressing (see recipe)

Cook beets as per recipe.

When beets are 20 minutes from being done, heat a 10-inch sauté pan over medium-high. When good and hot, film with oil and get oil almost smoking. Add the mushrooms and toss/stir to coat all over with oil. Season with salt and pepper and a pinch of thyme. Cook for 4-5 minutes until mushrooms start to color and soften. Add the wine and toss to coat. Cook until the wine evaporates and then cook further, coloring the mushrooms all over and getting the edges to crisp up. Taste a mushroom-you are looking for it to be cooked through with a deeper nutty flavor and some crispiness to it. Add the onions and cook 2-3 minutes more, until the onions are no longer raw and have picked up a little color and caramelization. Season if

needed with salt and pepper. Remove pan from burner and keep warm.

The beets should be ready to finish by now, so do so.

Toss the beets with the mushrooms and onions, scatter with a little thyme, then lightly dress the vegetables and serve warm. You can also cool this dish and serve it that way, or cool it, then microwave it to heat through and they dress it to serve it hot. If you wish too, you could finely slice some of the onion greens and scatter them on at the end. Serves: 4

White Balsamic Parsley Dressing, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 small clove garlic, peeled	1/2 tsp. minced/pulverized shallot
1 pinch of fresh thyme leaves, minced, or a smallish pinch of dried thyme leaves	Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup flat leaf parsley, leaves only, coarsely chopped	1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
3/4 cup mild flavored olive oil	

Rub a good sized non-reactive bowl with the whole garlic clove until you see some streaks left in the bowl and the bowl is lightly fragrant with garlic. Add the vinegar, and then the salt and pepper and shallot. Allow to macerate 10-15 minutes.

Add the thyme and whisk ingredients together.

In a slow steady stream, whisk in the oil, emulsifying as you go. When you have half the oil in the bowl. Add the parsley and whisk in. Return to whisking in the oil until the dressing is emulsified or all the oil is used up. Taste for balance and adjust if necessary. Use right away, or put in refrigerator until needed.

Yield: Around 1 cup and a little change

Basic Sauté of Mustard Greens, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch mustard greens, stemmed, washed, and drained	1-2 pieces bacon, cut into 1/4 inch batons
1 small onion, peeled and diced	2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
Salt and pepper to taste	2 TBS cider vinegar
2 TBS olive oil, or as needed	

Bring enough water to cover the greens to a boil, then add the greens. Boil 2 minutes, the drain. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out the excess water. If you wish, you can chop the greens into small bits. Reserve.

Heat a sauté pan large enough to hold the greens over medium-low heat. When hot, add the bacon and cook gently until crisp, rendering the fat without burning it. When the bacon is crisp, remove to paper a towel to drain.

Add the onion to the bacon fat and toss to coat. If needed, add just enough oil to coat the pan bottom, then cook the onions until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and softened. Add the greens to the pan and toss to mix with the onions and garlic, and coat with the oil. Season with salt and pepper. Add the vinegar and toss to coat. Cook to reduce the vinegar, and heat the greens through. Scatter the bacon over the greens and toss to mix.

Serve hot. Serves: 4