



# High Ground Organics

## Community Supported Agriculture

Week 5, April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### Farm Update, by Steve Pedersen

As always at this time of year, rainfall brings with it the good and the bad. The good far outweighs the bad in many ways, the most obvious being that we are still in a time of drought and the less irrigating we have to do the better. It helps in other ways as well. Most of the fields that were in over-wintering cover crops have been mowed down and tilled and are, in a way, like large, shallow compost piles. The addition of moisture can greatly speed up residue breakdown. This is especially helpful at our Lewis Road site with its sandy soils which dry out quickly. Moist soils also produce less dust making for healthier conditions when we resume working up beds next week.

The chief bad associated with late rainfall is that ripe strawberries rot quickly with excess humidity. This can make managing the field a challenge and sometimes we are forced to pick berries a little less ripe than normal to get them off the plants before a rainfall.

Rain is forecast again this Thursday, but after that we are expecting warm temperatures in the extended. This should help to push along some of the new crops we have planted. Over the next weeks we will shift to more of a position of abundance when we are trying to fill the boxes each week. The conversation here will switch from, "do you think it's OK to give them mustard greens again?" to "we have too many options, which should we choose?" The young crops that will be ready soon include beets, green onions, summer squash, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, basil, cilantro, fava beans and butter lettuces. The blueberry plants look great and are loaded with fruit that we should start picking by early May. And the strawberry crop is looking like one of the best ever for us—we'll be able to put full and half flats on the web store soon.

### Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

Ok, so maybe I was a bit harsh last week when I said that not eating your greens could be compared to "not drinking water" or "not breathing air". Still, they are important, and I can see that karma has blessed us with an extremely greens-heavy box this week, so let's take the opportunity to dive deep into the world of greens of all sorts, be they baby **kales**, leafy **chard**,

microgreens like **curly cress**, **lettuces**, **collards**, etc. This is spring and spring is all about eating all things green and fresh after months of munching on stored root vegetables and winter squashes and such.

This week, let's talk about cleaning and preparing **greens**. Yes, HGO is a certified organic farm, but your vegetables still grow in the earth and there are times when a little bit of earth hitchhikes on those ruffled leaves and deep crevices to land in your kitchen. How many of you have had a sandy salad or crunchy greens dish due to improper washing? (raises hand) It is better to wash your greens just before use, unless you can manage to get them completely dry, otherwise you can actually invite microorganisms onto the moist greens and they

will also wilt sooner. From my research and experience, the best way to clean greens is to fill a large bowl or salad spinner (some people use their sink and there are even recommendations to use a washing machine, but the thought of soap residues and other funk kind of turn me off. If your receptacle is something you would eat out of, however, have at it!). The benefit of floating and swishing the leaves in a tub of water is dirt sinks, but the leaves float, so all you need to do is let gravity do its work. Another benefit to this method is that you can put a double-use to that contained water. Instead of watching it run down the drain, the sandy water can be used to water your houseplants or porch plants and you can feel good about yourself knowing you have made a double use out of an "endangered" resource.

The next step is drying the greens and prepping them for use. If you have hearty greens with a large stem, like your **kales**, **chard**, **collards**, mustard, etc., shake the greens out then fold in half, then tear or cut out the stem. The stems are edible, but need a bit longer cooking time, so chop them finely and throw them in with your onions when you are sauteing, for example. The leaves can then be stacked, rolled up and chopped into ribbons or chunks. Your baby kales, as in your **braising mix** this week, probably will not need to be de-stemmed. Leaves of the **curly cress** and other herbs can probably be removed with scissors. **Lettuces** can be torn

or chopped. I find that throwing your leafy greens into the salad spinner after they have been prepared for use is helpful because they can continue to drain and dry until you are ready to use them.

Enjoy your veggies!

### Cooking Notes, by Andrew Cohen

**Curly Cress** shows up this week, and it is also known as Pepper Cress. It has a delicate texture and a not so delicate

### This Week

Strawberries

Braising Mix (Baby Kales,  
Mizuna, & Tatsoi)

Green OR Rainbow Chard

Curly Cress

Green Oak Leaf Lettuce

Little Gem Lettuce

Collard Greens

Artichokes\*

*Everything is certified organic.  
Artichokes are from Coke Farm. All  
other vegetables and fruit were  
grown by High Ground Organics.  
Note: last minute substitutions may  
be made.*

bite. It can taste anywhere from a pleasant mustardy prickle of heat to a downright sharp bite. It also has a touch of sweetness that shows just before the heat comes on. It is not a heat like chiles, but more like a wasabi or horseradish punch, and I love it. It is wonderful in salads of course, and this week features it in a salad atop seared swordfish, but it is great on crostini, or with bagels and smoked fish. As a salad, it combines well with **Little Gems** sliced finely and dressed with something with some substance. It adds a lot to a salad of wild arugula, frisée, endive, and mizuna, and it is good for topping grilled steaks as well. You could even blend it into a cold maître d'hotel butter for topping grilled steaks or thick cut pork chops. The swordfish with **cress** salad would be good on top of a sauté of the **braising greens**, or you could use the greens as part of a filling with **chard** stems, mushrooms, and grains that fill packets loaded into blanched chard leaves packed into buttered ramekins, which are cooked in a water bath. This is a recipe that did NOT get typed out this week. This dish can be made well ahead of time and frozen, defrosting just before popping it into the oven. Serve for breakfast topped with fried eggs or as a side dish with meats. **Oakleaf lettuces** are delicate leaved but have plenty of flavor. The **Little Gems** grill up really well, you can grill in halves, quarters, or loose leaves if you wish. The leaves also are good for dishes of ground meats and vegetables that are on the spicy side with Thai spicing. Use the leaves to convey food from the plate to the face, or just crunch them up after eating and enjoy the cooling sensation of the lettuce after something really hot.

*Note: We can't print them all, but Chef Andrew's recipes are always available in full at [highgroundorganics.com](http://highgroundorganics.com).*

**Sweet and Sour Collards with Petite Sirah**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch collards, stems discarded, leaves stacked, rolled, and cut into 1/2-inch ribbons, then cut across once or twice	2 large spring onions, lower portions only, halved lengthwise then sliced diagonally into 3-inch strips, or use one medium-small red onion Lyonnaise cut 1/8th-inch wide
2 cloves garlic, minced	2 thick-cut sweet and smoky bacon strips (hickory or alder wood work well), cut into 1/4-inch wide batons
1 tsp. fresh oregano	1/2 cup good quality Petite Sirah (eg Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard's '11 "Durif" Shephard's vineyard)
Black pepper and a touch of flaky salt	2 TBS good quality red wine vinegar, or as needed
Olive oil as needed	

Heat a 10-inch/3 quart sauteuse or frying pan over medium heat. Add the bacon and spread out over the floor of the pan. Cook, stirring and turning so the bacon cooks all over, and does not burn. When the bacon is crisp and well colored, remove with a slotted spoon, keeping the oil in the pan.

Remove the oil, saving it, until only a generous tablespoon remains in the pan. Add a few drops of olive oil to the fat. When it is hot, add the onions to the pan and toss to coat. Cook slowly so the onions do not burn and they become quite soft. Add the garlic and stir around. If the situation warrants it, add a little bacon fat and a touch of olive oil. Cook until the garlic is soft and fragrant. Scatter the herbs onto the alliums, and stir in.

Add half the wine and slowly cook down, stirring, so the alliums and hold take on a bit of jammish-ness. Push all the vegetables to the edge of the pan further away from you. Add a little more fat and some olive oil and heat it through. Add half the collards, then tong up the allium jammish and scatter over the greens. Top with the rest of the greens. Drizzle with a touch of oil and slowly cook for a couple minutes. Tong the mess over on itself and add the rest of the wine. Cook down until liquid is reduced by 80%. Stir greens around and season with lashings of pepper. Drizzle with the vinegar over the whole mess, scatter with the reserved bacon and stir around. Cook to heat the bacon and reduce any liquid to almost nil.

Serve hot. Serves: 4

**Basic Braise of Mixed Greens**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

4 cups braising mix, packed	1 small brown onion, split through the root and peeled
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil+1 tablespoon more	2 cloves of garlic, de-germed and minced
1 cup red wine, or white wine, or what ever is left over from the night before...	Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a quart of water to boil in a 2-quart chefs pan or saucepan.

Rinse the braising mix in cold water, submerging and lifting it out to leave any grit in the bottom of the bowl. Repeat.

When cleaned, transfer drained greens to the pot of boiling water. Stir until all the greens are submerged. If the greens will not remain submerged, add water to cover. Cooking the greens above the waterline could make for leathery greens. Cook covered.

Lower the heat to a simmer and let the greens cook gently for fifteen minutes to a half-hour, or until they are tender.

While the greens are cooking, slice the onion into thin half-moons and set aside. When the greens are done, drain off all but a tablespoon or two of the water, and then transfer the greens and remaining water to a bowl.

Turn the heat down to medium. Add a tablespoon of oil to the pan, and when hot, add the onions. Stir to break up the slices and to coat the onion with oil. Cook the onions until they soften up and are just beginning to turn golden.

Add the greens back into the pan and toss to mix the onions and greens together. Make a well in the center of the greens. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and heat until shimmering. Add the minced garlic and cook until fragrant and softening. Stir the mess (this is a technical term for greens, mind you...) to evenly distribute the garlic. (I do it this way to prevent the garlic from burning and turning bitter)

Add the wine, then re-cover the pot. Cook down until most of the wine is gone. Again, make a well in the center of the greens, turn up the heat to medium-high, and add the remaining oil. Stir to amalgamate with the remaining liquid and make a "sauce". Stir the mess around to incorporate the sauce into all the greens and season with salt and pepper if you wish. (Do not salt sooner as the salt will wilt the greens too much, and may help them turn an unappetizing khaki.)

Serve hot, or cool and reheat later. Serves 4

*Chef's Notes:* You can add mushrooms in with the onions, use a little bacon and cook in the rendered fat, or add olives towards the end of cooking-I prefer oil cured olives for this.

## Spread the Word

Please help us grow by inviting your friends to try the CSA! New members can use the coupon code, "LOCAL" to get \$10 off their order of 4 deliveries or more! Have them mention your name in the sign-up notes and you will be rewarded with a \$10 bonus in the web store! You can offer them this link to sign up:

*<http://csa.farmigo.com/join/highgroundorganics/csa>*

Another way you can help spread the word is to tag High Ground Organics in your facebook posts showing off your box or delicious meal or tag #highgroundorganics if you tweet or instagram. Thanks for helping bring our communities together and for supporting your local family farm!