



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 7: April 25th and 26th 2012

Weeding, from Jeanne

When people think about the difference between growing vegetables organically vs. conventionally, what generally pops into their minds is that they are different methods of handling insect pests--conventional growers use chemical pesticides while organic growers don't. This is certainly true. However, as far as growing methods is concerned, an even bigger difference between the two types of agriculture is in how they deal with weeds. Conventional growers often use chemical weed killers before planting their crops (or even after the crops are planted if the crop is resistant to that weed killer—like the new genetically modified “Round-Up Ready” crops.) Organic growers control weeds through only non-chemical methods.

Of course, organic growing encompasses more than just different ways of killing weeds and pests. It is a whole different approach to farming, in which organic farmers regard the farmland as a living system, trying to foster a healthy biosystem within the soil and surroundings, while conventional methods focus on sterilizing the soil and eliminating all life except the crop. But let's focus on weeds for the moment.

Because we do not have an easy way to clear weeds from our fields, we need to stay on top of them or they can quickly get out of hand. The many hours of extra labor costs spent on weeding are the main factor that makes organic vegetables more expensive to produce. Here on our farm, we remove weeds by hand weeding, flame weeding, and mechanical weeding. We use different approaches for different crops and at different stages of maturity, and there are too many variations to go into here.

The Allis Chalmers G tractor is one of the best tools we have for weeding. This is a small early-1950s tractor with cultivating knives under the belly that are spaced to fit around the rows of vegetables to clean out the weeds in between the rows without pulling up the crop. The farmer can see the ground and cultivating knives under his feet while he drives through the field. You have to be careful, because if you get just a little bit off, you might pull up a few feet of the crop you are trying to weed! I took pictures last week of Steve weeding some new plantings of lettuce and fennel. In the background you can see the crew weeding with long-handled hoes. After Steve drives through with the cultivator, they only need to get the weeds that are in between the crop plants within each row.

Spring "Open Farm" This Saturday!

April 28, 1-4 pm, at our Lewis Road Farm

Steve will give a tour of our Lewis Road farmland this Saturday starting at 1 PM. If you're interested in how we grow our crops this is a good opportunity to come out and see for yourself. This is a simple walking and talking tour around the farm—wear long pants, socks, and comfortable shoes that can get dirty. Kids are of course welcome to come and romp while we chat. Note for those allergic to bee stings: there are bee hives on site.

Directions: From Highway 1 head east on Salinas Road. Turn Right on Werner Rd., then right on Hall Road at the stop sign. Take the first left onto Garin Road (just over the bridge). Follow Garin until it ends. Turn right on Lewis Rd. The farm will be on your left, a little less than a mile up. The farm entrance is on the left through a gate in the middle of the big field just past the hoopouses. Check highgroundorganics.com/events for google directions.

This Week

Lola Rosa and Little Gem Lettuces

Meyer Lemons*

Tokyo Market Turnips

Mei Quin Choi

Swiss Chard

Dill or Parsley

Leeks

Mystery Item

Flowers: Scarlet Sweet William, Dutch Iris
and English Lavender

Veggie Notes

Store everything in the refrigerator. Remove the greens from the **turnips** and use the greens in the first day or two. **Dill** should be used as soon as possible for maximum freshness. You can store it in the fridge wrapped in a damp towel or placed upright in a glass with an inch of water. You can also dry the dill for later use or freeze it as is in a freezer bag. If you freeze it, you can just trim some off the frozen bunch whenever you need it and put the rest back in the freezer. **Parsley** should also be used in the first few days. You can make pesto with parsley--my favorite is actually combining parsley and cilantro half and half into pesto, but either also stands well on its own. **Mei Quin Choi** is a baby bok choy--great for stir-frying, or just a quick sauté with garlic. You may get **cauliflower** as a mystery item; Steve cooked the most wonderful cauliflower this week with green garlic, **lemon**, and **parsley** -- a yummy combination. Also, don't forget how wonderful a squeeze of **lemon** is in ice water or tea.

Notes from Chef Andrew

Lemon and **dill** go brilliantly together, and Meyer lemon especially. When I see those two together my first thought is always fish, whether it is bagels and lox with lemon slices and dill or the recipe for glazed sole provided here. I will caramelize the **Tokyo turnips**, but I will add **Meyer lemon** juice to the pan before I add the butter, and I will reduce the

juice until it forms a glaze, and then I'll add the butter. Once I add the turnips back into the pan I will scatter **dill** over and then serve. Another possibility for the **turnips** is to glaze them with lemon, and then cook the tops and dress them with reduced balsamic vinegar before combining the two for a sweet and sour combo. When using **dill**, I find using scissors is a great way to cut dill. If your knife is less sharp, the dill gets crushed and can end up quite pungent or mushy. Also, with scissors, you avoid the dill clumping up, which as a wet herb it is prone to do. Dill is also wonderful in softly scrambled farm fresh eggs with a little havarti cheese. The **chard** will find its way into a soup (see recipe) or it will get mixed into a dish of lentils. The **mei quin choi** gets a relatively traditional turn in the kitchen and will be served with rice and tofu with mushrooms.

Broiled Sole with a Lemon Dill Crust, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 to 1½ pounds of sole, or other thin flat fish fillet	5 TBS mayonnaise
1-2 TBS Dijon style mustard (or to taste)	1 teaspoon Meyer lemon juice (or more as needed)
1-2 TBS fresh dill (or parsley), snipped finely with your sharpest scissors	Salt and pepper to taste
Oil or butter as needed	Meyer lemon wedges for passing

Preheat the broiler and place a rack 4 to 5 inches away from the broiler. Place foil onto a pan that will hold the fish and fit under the broiler. Lightly oil or butter the foil. In a non-reactive bowl, whisk the mayo and the mustard together. Taste before adding all the mustard. Neither the mustard nor the mayo should stand out as a dominant flavor; the mixture should meld into something not quite mayo, not quite mustard. Add the lemon juice and stir. Season with the salt and pepper and whisk in thoroughly. Taste again for balance. Adjust if needed. Taking care not to smash the dill, sprinkle it over the surface of the sauce, starting with half the amount. Mix it in, and taste the sauce. Add more dill as needed to give a definite dill flavor without being overwhelming.

Place the fish fillets on the foil of the broiler pan, and then paint the fillets with the dill lemon mayo. Cover the fillets with the sauce, but never more than ¼ inch thick. Place the pan under the broiler and cook until the sauce has turned bubbly and golden with dark speckling. This should take about 8-10 minutes. Use a long thin bladed spatula to remove the fish to dinner plates. (I would advise against trying to move the fillets to a serving platter and then to plates as the fish is fragile.) Serve hot with lemon wedges for squeezing on the side.

Chef's Notes: This sauce works well on slabs of tofu, and works for boneless/skinless chicken breasts as well. For the chicken, slice the chicken ½ an inch thick and paint with the sauce. Cook in the center of the oven until done and golden, around 20-25 minutes.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. This week the lemons are from Marsalisi Farm. All other vegetables were grown by High Ground Organics. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.

CSA Cooking Classes

by Chef Joni Sare in Cupertino

Roshambo, or rock-paper-scissors, is a 'trump' game where one hand gesture trumps another. Joni brings this idea into the kitchen, demonstrating how various flavors are used to 'trump' other flavors (e.g. salt trumps the sharp peppery taste of the turnips; sour trumps the bitter taste of the chard). Upcoming classes: Wed., April 25th, 6:30 to 8:30pm; Wed., May 2nd, 6:30 to 8:30pm; Thurs., May 3rd, 6:30 to 8:30pm. \$25 for each class. See (www.jonisare.com/csa-cooking-classes) for the payment link, or call her at 408-320-5664. Each class includes a light meal of the food. All meals will be vegetarian (ideas can be given for meat, fish, poultry).

“Quick Braised” Mei Quin Choi and Leeks, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Not quite a stir-fry, this is a dish where a small amount of liquid is introduced to steam the vegetables and form a bit of sauce. In traditional Chinese cooking this is viewed as a braise. This sort of braising is used on vegetables with a more delicate texture or flavor. For this dish you will need a 10 inch pan or wok that has a tight fitting lid.

3-5 small to medium heads mei quin choi (around 1-1½ pounds), bottoms trimmed and split lengthwise. If halves are wider than 2 inches, split into quarters	Grapeseed or other neutral flavored oil, as needed
1 leek, white part only, split lengthwise and sliced lengthwise into very thin ribbons then washed	½ TBS finely minced peeled ginger
¼ cup shaoxing (Chinese cooking wine) or white wine such as sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio, or sake	2 TBS oyster sauce
½ cup vegetable stock or water	1 tsp. sugar
1 teaspoon cornstarch	1 tsp. cold water

Mix together the corn starch and cold water to make a “slurry”. Reserve near the stove. Heat a large skillet or wok that has a tight fitting lid over medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, film it with oil. When the oil is hot, add the leek ribbons and stir-fry until wilting, around 30 seconds. Add the ginger and cook until fragrant, being careful not to burn it. Add the mei quin and cook until the sections pick up a little color, around 1 minute. Add oil if needed to do this. Add the wine to the pan and bring to the boil. Sprinkle in the sugar and add the oyster sauce and stir in. Add the stock or water and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and gently cook for 5 minutes. Remove the top and use a slotted spoon or skimmer to remove the vegetables to a serving platter. Slowly drizzle the slurry into the pan liquid, stirring all the while to prevent clumping. Raise the heat and bring the pan to the boil. (The sauce should thicken very quickly.) Once the sauce boils, pour it over the vegetables and serve hot.

Chef's Notes: This dish will probably take twice as long to prep as it will to cook. Serve it with rice or noodles. You could add chunks of tofu when you add the liquid if you wish, or you could add snow peas. If you do not want to use oyster sauce, try using 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce or soy sauce. There are “thick” soy sauces that would work well, especially the one seasoned with mushroom.