



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 8, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Greenhouse Update, by Jeanne Byrne

Things are hopping on the farm now. We're doing a lot of planting every week, and getting into the swing of harvesting more each week. The strawberries are still ramping up. Blueberries are also running a bit late this year. But we're seeing some fruit start to blue up out there, so we're hoping to get the bird netting over the patch this week.

Steve installed a sprinkler system in the green houses where we start our seeds over the weekend. He used the same type of efficient sprinkler heads that we use in the field hoopouses at our Lewis Road ranch. This system should save water because the water is applied at a more gradual rate than it is when watering by hand, so it has time to soak in instead of flowing off onto the floor. It will also save a lot on labor—it can take up to 40 minutes to thoroughly water our “big” greenhouse by hand.

Starting most of our crops in the greenhouse instead of planting directly into the field has several advantages. For one, germination is never 100%; it typically ranges from 60% to 90%. So planting seeds directly into the field means that you can either have huge gaps in your field—an inefficient use of space—or you need to plant the seeds more closely together than you want the plants to be, then go through and thin the field out later—a waste of both seed and labor. A second advantage to the greenhouse for the young starts is that they can be coddled, with some protection from extremes in weather and regular watering and fertilizing exactly when they need it. Plus some plants like warmer temperatures for germinating, and we can put those on a heated pad.

But probably the greatest advantage to starting the crops in the greenhouse is that they get a head start on the weeds. Weed competition on an organic farm can be fierce, and labor spent combating weeds is probably the most significant cause of the increased cost of organic produce over conventional. Conventional farms apply herbicides to kill weeds, both prior to planting and after the seedlings have emerged. In our area they also have the advantage of planting into ground that has recently been fumigated—a process that kills most of the weed seeds in the soil (and most everything else for that matter). That's not the sort of farm ecosystem we are after, of course, but it is certainly frustrating when the farm is busy as can be and the weeds take over a plot of young carrots because we weren't able to get in at the right time to weed.

Weed control has many aspects on our farm, from using our cultivating tractor and hoeing by hand, to using the “stale seedbed” approach, where we water up weeds and kill them either mechanically or with the flame weeder before planting the crop. Starting crops in the greenhouse first means that when we do plant them out they at least have a head start. The weed seeds will germinate as soon as we start watering the plot, but the starts will have the advantage of height and vigor, and have a chance to shade out and otherwise outcompete the weeds. Used in conjunction with our new European “finger” weeders, which kill a large percentage of the in-row weeds that the knives on our cultivating tractor miss, we have become much more effective in our weed control this season.

## In The Box

Red Little Gem Lettuce  
Green Little Gem Lettuce  
Parsley  
Spinach OR Swiss Chard  
Baby Leeks  
Collard Greens  
Oyster Mushrooms\*  
Strawberries OR  
Asparagus\*

*All produce is certified organic. Mushrooms are from Far West Fungi. Asparagus is from Coke Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.*

## Veggie Notes, by Jason Johnson

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

The food we eat mirrors who we are, and flavors of youth seem to find their way to the table again and again. I cook **collards** the way my mom cooks them. I sauté them on medium-high heat in olive oil, then drizzle in balsamic vinegar toward the end. Salt and pepper to taste. The vinegar evaporates and leaves a tangy, slightly sweet profile that goes great with roasted potatoes, leeks, and mushrooms. Garnish that with some **parsley** and top with a couple of fried eggs for a healthy and happy Sunday brunch. **Parsley** has a long heritage of being used as medicine for arthritic pain, and current science finds that high concentrations of vitamin C, like that found in **parsley**, acts as an anti-inflammatory. **Chard**, another ancient medicine, gets its unique flavor from a thing called syringic acid, which slows the breakdown of simple sugars in our blood, preventing spikes and drops in blood sugar that we all experience before and after meals. My favorite way to cook chard is with beans and **leeks**. First caramelize the **leeks**

in oil over medium heat. While the **leeks** are cooking, strain cooked beans in a colander (whether from a can or dried and boiled) and add them to the skillet with salt and pepper to taste. After about two minutes, add the **chard** and let wilt. I tend to serve this the same way I do soup, in a bowl with grilled cheese or cornbread. Add a salad of little gem for a well-rounded meal.

With days getting longer and evenings getting warmer, time spent around the table will likely be replaced with soccer practice, gardening endeavors, and all things summer. Busy times call for quick recipes and with this week's box, a nutritious meal doesn't have to interfere with what makes you, well, you. Enjoy your veggies!

## Chef's Notes, by Andrew Cohen

This week marks a milestone for me. I feel a bit like Scheherazade of the recipes as the week sees the recipe count I have done hit 1001. As I never really had a goal other than helping Jeanne and Steve out with recipes for their exceptional produce, I find a large degree of surprise, and satisfaction, in the number. It has taken just over 6 years to get here, and I hope that people have found some useful info about what has been in the boxes and that the recipes were fun, and tasted good.

As to the box, **oyster mushrooms** make a great pairing for **spinach**. Tear the **mushrooms** up into thick shreds, then start sautéing the mushrooms dry. After they have softened, add a little or butter, some garlic and herbs, then add the washed spinach over low heat and wilt the **spinach**, tossing to combine with the **mushrooms** and garlic. When wilted, serve right away.

Use the **Little Gems** to make a salad that uses quickled leeks and a **parsley** vinaigrette or creamy **parsley** dressing.

**Collards** get an Indian treatment with coconut milk that makes the greens a little sweet, and little spicy, and a little funky. Add chilis, lemongrass and cilantro and you have a Thai dish. Throw in the **oyster mushrooms** for more Thai influence.

The **baby leeks** can be used as onions might be, or they can be done as a traditional bistro dish as well. This week sees them glazed in Kimes Apiary honey. The flavor of this honey is phenomenal--it has lots of character, and like the best wines the aroma is packed with various notes, and the flavor transforms in the mouth and has a long finish to it. Also, like wine, it reflects where it is grown (or gathered I suppose), only honey does this more I believe. Unlike a lot of honey, this one is not cloyingly sweet. Yes it is honey and so it is sweet, but it seems less so than some. If you can get some of this honey you will be in for a treat. Besides toast and tea, and leeks, this tea is great for "lacquering" things like quail, duck breast, carrots and beets. It is worth seeking out desserts that feature honey as well when you have this as the dessert becomes much more interesting when you use interesting honey.

Khoda hafez.

### Honeyed Leeks, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This dish was inspired by a 12 pound tub of Kimes Apiary honey from the farm I was gifted this winter. The flavor of this honey is phenomenal and brings a lot to the dish. The leeks have an earthy funky note that marries so well with honey. Use these leeks as a starter dish or a side to something braised in wine or vinegar, or something fried like chicken or squid.

1 bunch baby leeks, trimmed of rootlets and greens	2 TBS high quality, low moisture, butter
2 TBS Kimes Apiary honey	1-2 TBS orange or Meyer lemon juice
½ tsp. fresh thyme, minced	Salt and pepper to taste

In a small sauce pan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Allow the butter to cook long enough to take on a bit of a nutty flavor. Add the honey and stir in until the honey liquefies. Turn up the heat to medium, and cook until the contents of the pan reduces 25%. Add the citrus juice and stir in. Cook gently until the contents of the pan reduces by 50-

60% or until it thickens into a glaze. Add the thyme and stir in, then season with salt and pepper. Taste for balance as needed and adjust as necessary. Keep sauce warm.

Place the leeks into a large steamer and cook until tender all the way through.\* Timing on this will be based on how thick the leeks are, but figure 20 minutes as a starting point. If you do not have a large steamer, place a wide bowl into a big pot, fill with water to the top of the bowl, and set a wide plate onto the bowl, then place the leeks onto the plate, then cover with a lid.

Once leeks are cooked, use tongs to transfer them to a shallow rimmed pan and spread them out flat. Drizzle with the honey glaze and roll them around to thoroughly coat.

At this point you can serve them hot or you can cool them in the glaze, rolling them as they cool to coat evenly. If serving them cool, place in the refrigerator until 20-30 minutes prior to serving. You want them cool, or room temp, but not cold. Hot leeks have a brighter more floral flavor profile whereas leeks served cool have an earthier tone.

However you serve them, drizzle with any glaze from the bottom of their pan, and a scattering of salt flakes, preferably Maldon or Murray River.

*Chef's Notes:* \*Besides steaming, you can blanch or roast the leeks before glazing them. Also, you could add orange flower water to the glaze, or even a very few drops or rose water if your honey is of a more mundane variety. If using rose or orange flower water, you could scatter the leeks with roasted pistachios to make the dish more Indian or Persian.

Serves: 4

### Collards in Coconut Milk with Onion, Ginger, and Garlic, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 small white or brown onion, cut into 1/8th inch half-moons	1 bunch collards, stemmed and cut into ¼ inch wide ribbons across the leaf, washed and drained
2 nickel-sized slices of ginger	1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
¼ cup coconut milk, or as needed	Salt and pepper to taste
Grapeseed, avocado, or other high heat neutral flavored oil	

Heat a large (11-inch/4 quart) wok or chef's pan over medium heat. When the pan is hot, film it with oil and add the onions. Cook, stirring all the while, until the onions are soft and translucent.

Make a well in the center of the pan and ensure there is a fair bit of oil on the pan floor. If not, add some and heat through. Add the ginger and cook 30 seconds until aromatic. Add the garlic and stir in, ensuring it does not color. When it is aromatic, add the collards. Using tongs, mix everything together so ingredients are well blended.

Cook, stirring all the while, just until the greens have wilted. Season well with salt and pepper, then add the coconut milk and stir to coat the leaves. Continue cooking until the leaves are tender. At this point, transfer the vegetables to a serving bowl and keep warm. Turn up the heat under the remaining liquid in the pan and reduce it until it thickens up or there is only a tablespoon or so left. Pour over the vegetables, toss, and serve.

Serves: 4