



High Ground Organics

Community Supported Agriculture

Week 8, May 6th and 7th, 2015

Water Woes Hit Home, by Jeanne Byrne

We ran into a little glitch on Wednesday when we tried to irrigate a new planting of lettuce—the sprinklers never came up to pressure. The well at our home farm is very shallow and very old and we've known for the past year or so that it was failing. We are on the waiting list to have a deeper well dug, but with the high demand for wells right now, we've got another 6-7 months before that happens. We were hoping to squeak through the year, but apparently that's not going to happen.

Steve quickly contacted the managers of the neighboring farms and arranged to tie our irrigation system into theirs. We lease several acres from the Santa Cruz Land Trust, who now owns the neighboring property. They lease most of the property to Reiter Berries who subleases to Lakeside Organics, and they already have systems in place for separating different parts of that 350 acre farm and dividing the water bills among the users. We just had to trench across our driveway to tie into their mainline irrigation piping.

With crops in the ground this had to happen fast and it did! Steve hired a backhoe operator and by Saturday morning they had connected the new pipes and we were able to water several of our fields at once. This is going to make things much easier for us. With our well, the pressure had decreased so much that we had been down to being able to water only a couple of lines of sprinklers at a time. We can only get a few irrigation "sets" in per day, and had to water constantly to try to get water to every part of the farm that needed it.

In the end the crisis turned out as well as we could have wished, and we're grateful to the neighboring farmers and landowner for helping us out of this bind. Now we can focus on getting our backlog of starts from the greenhouse into the ground without worrying about whether we'll be able to water them!

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Storage: Everything should be refrigerated. Always rinse produce before use.

Strawberries continue to bring joy. These sweet things are also available for special order, by flat or half-flat in the web store. (Blueberries are on hold in the web store until we fill all

of last week's orders. Thanks for your patience and check back towards the end of the week.)

Summer squash varieties may include zucchini, Costata Romanesco, Cousa and Yellow Crookneck.

Mei Quin Choi are a small and tender variety of choy, perfect for a brothy soup or a gingery stir-fry.

Escarole is lettuce-looking, but not lettuce-tasting. This member of the endive family is on the bitter side, encouraging digestion and stimulating appetite. It has a silky quality when cooked.

Your body will convert the beta-carotene in these **carrots** to vitamin A which helps maintain vision, healthy skin and respiratory tract.

Scallions add a flash of flavor to your meals. Use scissors for the green parts.

Snap peas are a surprise treat for you. They can be eaten shell and all, and are delightful in a stir fry or the kids' lunch boxes.

"Lettuce" give thanks to **butter lettuce** for providing the salads this week.

Be well!

Cooking Notes, by Chef Andrew Cohen

Try slicing **scallion** whites on a long diagonal and cooking with **carrots** cut the same, then add the tops cut in the same manner at the end. Use the **scallions** with the **summer squash** in a sauté, or quickle the whites for a sauté with **escarole**. Make a salad of favas with **butter lettuce** and quickled **scallion** whites or lightly dressed chunks of **raw summer squash**. The various colors of the **summer squash** will make a lively colored **Summer Squash Gratin**. Add dollops of pesto to enhance the flavor, or drizzle with some thinned tapenade. Of the **summer squash**, the **Cousa** and **Costata**

Romanesco both stay crisp longer than most sautéed summer squash, and they pair beautifully with almond or hazelnut flavors.

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

Easy Gratin of Summer Squash, Basil, and Onions, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This gratin makes a great vegetarian sandwich—just smear a soft roll with tapenade and lay in some of this gratin. This gratin is really fun if you have various colors of squash to play with as it yields a nice colorful dish. Although the instructions seem long, they are not really, and once you have done this you will find a hundred variations spring to mind.

This Week

Strawberries

Mixed Summer Squash

Snap Peas*

Mei Quin Choi

Escarole

Scallions

Butter Lettuce

Carrots

Everything is certified organic. Snap peas are from Coke Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Please note: last minute substitutions may be made.

4 cups brown onions (around 3 medium to large onions), sliced into 1/8th to 3/16th inch half moons	3 cloves garlic, peeled, 2 minced finely
4-6 1½ diameter Costata Romanesco, Cousa, or zucchini, sliced at an angle into ¼-inch slices* (enough to cover the bottom of the cooking dish.)	6-8 fresh basil leaves, torn into smaller bits -OR- ½ tablespoon herb blend such as Herbes de Provence or Italian Herbs
Salt and pepper to taste	Olive oil as needed
Special Equipment: Gratin dish-around 13×9 oval or 11×7 rectangle-something around 2 to 3 quarts	

Heat the oven to 425°F. Heat a 10-inch sauté pan over medium-high heat, and film generously with oil. When the oil is hot (you will see the surface “shivering”), add the onions, and toss to coat them with the oil. Cook gently to soften the onions and give them a little color, just to a golden color. Be careful not to burn the onions or cook them too much.

While the onions cook, take the peeled whole garlic clove and rub the inside surface of the gratin dish quite firmly with the garlic clove. You should be able to see a track of garlic oil filming the dish. Discard the remnant of garlic or mince and add to onions.

When the onions have softened, make a well in the center of the onions and add a little oil. Add the garlic to oil when it is warm and cook the garlic until fragrant. Toss with the onions to mix in, and add half of whichever herbs you are using. Season with salt and pepper and finish cooking the onions. When the onions are done, put them in the garlic rubbed gratin dish and level out.

Place the sliced squash into a large bowl and spritz or drizzle lightly with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. If using the dried herb mix, sprinkle a little into the squash bowl and toss to combine.

Place the gratin so a narrower side/oval “tip” is closest to you. Beginning at the end that is away from you, begin layering in the squash. The squash should be put in so the angle with the skin showing is facing up. Fill in each row, cutting pieces if needed to take the squash to the edges. Place the next row of squash over the first, covering 2/3rds of the first row. Continue until you reach the end closest to you. If you are using basil for the seasoning, slip the remaining basil bits under some of the slices of squash. If using the dried herbs, sprinkle the rest over the gratin. Drizzle or spritz with a little more oil, and place in the center of the oven and bake for 45 minutes or so. The vegetables should be softened and tender, and caramelizing around the edges, and golden on the surface. If the squash seems to be getting soupy, increase the heat to 450-475°F to drive off excess liquid and caramelize the vegetables.

When the dish is golden, it is done. Remove from the oven and allow to cool 10-15 minutes so it has a chance to firm up a little, otherwise it will probably fall apart while trying to serve it. Serve hot, warm, or room temperature. Serves: 4 (or more)

Chef's Notes: *If you have different types of squash, mix them up for a more colorful and flavorful dish.

You could add some grated Parmesan, Romano, or Dry Monterey Jack to the surface of the dish in the last 10 to 15 minutes of cooking. You could also toss some breadcrumbs with a very little olive oil and herbs and scatter them over the

surface towards the end to add a nice crunch to the dish. Some slices of oil cured olives go nicely, or you could try paper thin slices of Meyer lemon tucked almost completely under the squash slices for a wonderful aroma and flavor. This is a good dish as leftovers- it makes a great sandwich, and adding some fresh mozzarella and tomato makes it even better. It is good in an omelette, and I have smeared crunchy Swedish rye crackers with tapenade, leftover squash gratin, and tuna salad for an impromptu appetizer that was quite delicious.

Mei-Quin Braised with Bacon, Onion, and Oyster Mushroom, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This can serve as a base for something like fish, or you can use it as a side. Add some slices of pork and some noodles and it can be a one-pot full meal.

4-6 heads mei-quin, halved lengthwise (trim root end but keep intact to hold halves together)	3-4 strips thick cut bacon, cut ¼-inch across, cooked crisp, fat and bacon reserved separately
½ lb. King Oyster mushrooms, quartered lengthwise and scored in a crosshatch -OR- ½ lb. oyster mushrooms in clusters, clusters broken down to smaller groups but still partly intact	4-5 scallions, whites and greens separated, whites sliced 1-inch diagonal x 1/8th inch, and greens shaved thinly 2-inches
1 medium-small white or yellow onion (use a spring onion if possible), cut Lyonnais 1/8th inch thick	1 large clove garlic, minced
½ cup dry white wine	1 cup light vegetable stock
3 sprigs fresh thyme	Salt and pepper to taste
Neutral flavored oil as needed	

Heat a large sauté pan with a tight lid over medium-high heat. When hot, film with oil and a teaspoon of bacon fat. When shivering, add the mei-quin, cut sides down and sauté until colored. Flip and cook a couple minutes to add a little flavor. Remove from the pan and set aside.

If needed, add a little oil and fat to the pan. Season the mushrooms and add to the hot oil/fat cut sides down. If using oyster mushroom clusters, add to the pan and flatten a little with a spatula. Cook each side until colored and lovely golden. Pull from the pan and place on paper toweling and allow to drain. Again, if needed, add oil. Add the onions and sauté until limp and clear. Add the whites of the scallions and toss to mix.

Make a well in the pan center and add the garlic and thyme branches. Sauté until just fragrant, then add the white wine. Cook until reduced by 80%. Add the stock and bring to a simmer. Add the mushrooms, then put the mei-quin, cut surfaces facing up, on top of the mushrooms. Put the top on the pan and braise for 5-10 minutes, until the mei-quin turns translucent celadon and the mushrooms are hot and cooked through. When the ingredients are tender, add the scallion tops and cooked bacon and toss to combine.

Transfer contents of the pan to a platter and cook any remaining liquid down to a thicker consistency. Pour over the dish and serve. Serves: 4

Chef's Notes: If you wanted to add color and textural variety, try adding carrot. Cut into thin coins, or use a peeler to shave long wide strips and add them with the onions. Blanch before starting and then sauté with the onions.