



# High Ground Organics

## Community Supported Agriculture

Week 20, July 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### The Owl Show, by Jeanne Byrne

On the evening of July 4th, I walked out to the conservation easement to check on the goats and horses we have grazing there to make sure they weren't too freaked out by the fireworks. As I approached the oak trees I was suddenly aware of a multitude of barn owls. They were making their hissing shrieks and flying back and forth over my head. I counted at least six owls. I figured they were mostly young ones newly fledged. It was clear that I wasn't wanted there, so I backed off and took a different route.

When we first moved here in the spring of 2000, there were barn owls living in the roof of the old milking parlor. That summer we were treated to what we called the Owl Show. We would turn off all the lights in the house and just watch the owls flying back and forth between the old barns and sheds on the property.

The next year we tackled the project of turning that old milking parlor into a usable packing shed. Steve's brother Will was helping us out at the time. He started fixing the roof in the part of the building that had a couple enclosed rooms and an attic. He pried off a rotting board and came face to face with eight pairs of owl eyes. Four little owlets, each a little bigger than the next, stared out at him. He gingerly replaced the board and we put the project on the back burner until the next winter.

Every farmer loves barn owls. They are extremely helpful predators, feeding mostly on mice, voles, and rats. One owl might eat 3-4 prey animals per night, and try to bring that many back to the nest for each owlet. This can work out to dozens of rodents each night for one nesting pair and their brood. Who could ask for a better pest control method?

We didn't want to disrupt the barn owls, but we were going to be fixing up or tearing down all the old buildings. We got some plans and constructed four barn owl boxes. We installed two in the conservation easement area, and another two on the other side of the farm in the riparian corridor below the blueberry patch. All four boxes were occupied the first year we put them up, and as far as we can tell, most or all of the boxes have been in use every season since.

So, while I didn't go see a fireworks show on July 4th this year, I did get to see something spectacular in my backyard -- the Owl Show.

### Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated except **tomatoes** if you get them.

Good news for **pepper** lovers! It is pepper season at last! This week, we will be showcasing **red and yellow Santa Fe peppers** from our friends at Coke Farm. These peppers, also known as "guero peppers" have a mild heat (500-700 on the Scoville scale, compared to jalapenos at 5000) with a bit of sweetness, making them a great candidate for salsas (see Andrew's salsa recipe this week) and other raw preparations.

Of course, you can always stick them right on the grill, or take a bit of time to prepare a stuffed pepper by hollowing out the inside and inserting your favorite mixture of grains, legumes, and greens, or meat and fruit, or whatever combination gets your fancy. If you want to really get "Santa Fe" about it, work in some corn and black beans to your stuffing!

**Mustard greens** are back in action, and could maybe handle some heat in the pan along with those brightly colored **peppers** and some **green onion** slices. These chartreuse ruffled leaves have a bit of a peppery kick, but don't let them intimidate you! Just work them into the saute as you would any other leafy green or get creative by going Indian-style. By the way, they are tender enough that you can maneuver them into a salad, which may be a good option this week, since there's no lettuce in the box this time around.

Crisp, deeply-flavored **celery** delivers rich umami flavors for you this week, not just on your plate, but in your glass, as well. Ok, we all know about the role of celery in your Bloody Marys, but what about a celery thyme tequila sparkler? Or a gin and celery cocktail called the "Driftwood"? Celery Gimlet? Or work in your **cucumber** and **cilantro** for the famous Celery Cup!

The **summer squash** and the **Mei Quin Choi** could easily be pan-mates. I'm thinking a curry or stir-fry or such.

Bring in the **tomatoes** and an Asian vinaigrette for an intriguing salad option. The addition of **cilantro** will send it all to the tropics, and of course, some thin slices of **green onion** will top it all off.

By the way, we originally planned for **basil** in the box this week. For that reason, most of Andrew's recipes contain a basil flair. The basil, however, was uncooperative, so we are subbing **cilantro**. Interchange as you see fit.

Enjoy your veggies!

### Chef's Notes, by Andrew Cohen

A diverse spread to this week's box, allowing a cook to travel from Asia to the Mediterranean, and even Mexico and

Strawberries  
Santa Fe Peppers\*  
Mustard Greens  
Mei Quin Choi  
Mixed Summer Squash  
Tomatoes OR Cucumbers  
Celery  
Green Onions  
Cilantro

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

the South West via Italy. The Italian salsa can go from Italy to the Middle East by simply changing the seasoning. Adding za'atar and mint or **cilantro** in lieu of basil would certainly move you into the Mid-East and make for a nice mezze or accompaniment. You could even drizzle the dish with some pomegranate syrup.

The Grilled **Summer Squash** with Creamy Charred **Scallion Basil Dressing** is served hot in the post recipe, but if you cool the squash and cut it into different, smaller, shapes you could have a nice salad started. Add some ice cold romaine shreds and toss with the squash and dressing, then top with a dice of seeded tomatoes. Change basil to mint for a cooling combination.

How about a **mustard scallion** slow sauté? The mustard and scallions are cooked in oil seasoned with chili oil and sesame oil, and get a good dusting of sesame seeds.

Another possibility is Chinese inspired and uses more than half the ingredients in the box. This is a stir-fry of **mei-quin choy** stalks cut into baton and the leaves cut in half. **Celery** gets long diagonals, as does the **scallions** and **peppers**. They all get tossed over very high heat, and then a sauce is made by adding a lot of garlic and ginger, and drizzling hoi sin sauce into the pan. Vegetable stock, about a cup of it, gets lobbed in, and after a few seconds, the stock is thickened with a cornstarch slurry. (For a slurry, add 1 tablespoon room-temperature stock or water to 1 tablespoon cornstarch. This amount of slurry is what is used for 1 cup liquid.) Serve with rice or noodles.

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

### Grilled Summer Squash with Creamy Charred Scallion Basil Dressing, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1½ pounds summer squash, different shapes and colors preferred, halved across the widest/longest plane	1 lemon for juice
2 cloves garlic peeled	Olive oil as needed
1 cup or as needed Creamy Charred Scallion Basil Dressing (See recipe on website)	Salt and pepper to taste, and as needed

Get a grill hot. Make sure the grates are brushed well.

Cut 1/8th inch deep into the cut surfaces of the squash to form diamonds on the surface, spacing the lines ¼-inch apart. (This helps the flavors of the marinade penetrate.) Scatter salt over the cut surfaces of the squash.

Rub a peeled garlic clove on the bottom of a non-reactive bowl until you see the garlic oils on the surface. Do this until the clove is falling apart. Wait for the oil to dry then repeat with the second clove. Squeeze the lemon juice into the bowl and season with a little salt and plenty of pepper. Whisk 15-20 seconds so the flavors of the garlic are picked up by the lemon. Toss the squash in the juice and allow to marinate for 5-12 minutes. Drain well and drizzle with olive oil.

Grill, leaving nice marks on the squash. Flip and repeat. Cook just until the squash are cooked through. They should be tender but still retain a little snap to them. Remove to a platter and drizzle with the dressing. Serve.

Serves: 4

### Italian “Salsa” (Pico de Gallo style mix of tomato, summer squash, scallions, peppers, and basil), from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This is a typical pico de gallo salsa, but made with summer squash rather than cucumbers, and scallions stand in for white or yellow onions, and mild sweet peppers replace the typical jalapeño. Put **cilantro** and **lime** back in place of basil and lemon to take it back to Mexico. If you like it hot, add a spicy chili or two or scatter some pizza-house chili flakes in.

3-4 medium tomatoes, halved at the equator and seeded into a sieve set over a non-reactive bowl, then cut into ¼ inch dice	2-4 (enough to yield 2 cups) summer squash-different colors are great- cleaned and cut into ¼ inch or slightly smaller dice
1 heaping cup scallion whites, trimmed and cleaned, cut into 1/8th inch rounds (if scallions are wide diameter, split down the length)	1 heaping cup Gypsy or Santa Fe peppers cut into ¼ inch dice*
10-15 medium tender basil leaves, stem removed, halved lengthwise, stacked, and cross cut into very fine slivers with your sharpest knife	Salt as needed-Diamond Crystal Kosher is perfect for this recipe
Pepper if desired	Olive oil as needed
1-2 lemons for juice	1 pinch dried chili flakes, or jarred hot Italian chilies to taste minced, or 1-2 minced jalapeños if you want heat

In a non-reactive bowl, toss the summer squash with scattering of salt. Allow to sit 10-15 minutes, then rinse and dry well using a salad spinner, or a towel) put the squash into the towel and whirl it windmill-like to expedite the drying process. Return to the bowl (cleaned of all salt and dried) and drizzle with lemon juice. Toss to evenly coat the squash, then drizzle with a little olive oil and toss.

Add the onions and peppers and toss to combine. Add the tomatoes, and any juice that accumulated in the bowl when you seeded the tomatoes and diced them. Toss gently to mix. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and add chili now if you are going to use it, and fold in and mix lemon and tomato juices. Taste for flavor and balance, remembering you will still be adding olive oil and basil. Add more lemon if needed and mix in, remembering the lemon is there to spark the subtle flavors of the squash and to act as a preservative to the vegetables, but too much and lemon flavor will dominate, plus the acid will cause the vegetables to start breaking down quickly. Once you have the lemon juice in that you want, add pepper if using, then drizzle with oil. Combine with everything else, then scatter the just-cut basil over the salsa and mix in. Taste, and maybe add just a pinch of salt. Serve or refrigerate until needed. Keeps 2-4 days. Yield: 4-5 cups

*Chef's Notes:* \*If the peppers seem to be lacking flavor, try oiling them a little and grilling or dry sautéing them with just the oil you rubbed on. The charring will lend the peppers a very nice flavor. This salsa is good scattered on thin crust pizzas, stuffed into whole fish and roasted, tossed with pasta, or used in lasagna. Serve with carta di musica (thin bread/crackers that resemble sheet music) instead of tortilla chips. Toss with farro or fregula.