



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 22, August 9th and 10th, 2017

NOT Farm Fresh to You, by Jeanne Byrne

If you google High Ground Organics on your phone, your entire phone screen will fill with links to a website full of colorful pictures of vegetables and fruits, feel-good farm fresh organic language, and prominent sign up buttons. The problem? You'll be signing up for Farm Fresh to You, a massive CSA-like creature that is gobbling its way to tens of thousands of customers' doors per week.

A customer came to our farmstand manager Mike this weekend and said she signed up for our CSA online but the box came from Farm Fresh to You. She was confused and thought we must have some sort of partnership. No, we don't.

You've probably seen the army of FFTY sales reps—on the street, at your door, coming up to you when you're sitting on the beach, from San Francisco to L.A. They have an aggressive and effective marketing scheme. But this really goes too far.

It is possible to buy advertising that puts your information up in front of your "competitors" when a person googles key words, in this case "organic" or "csa." I've been aware of this as a computer user. On the computer, I know that the top items that come up are paid-for ads and my eye automatically skips over them to the first non-paid item that comes up. But people are increasingly using their phones for these kinds of searches. And on the phone, it's not so clear. This ad is designed to take up the entire screen, so High Ground Organics does not appear on my phone unless I scroll down. And while the first FFTY link indicates that it's an ad, there's a line between that and the \$15 coupon below it which has four prominent links to How it Works, Why Choose Us, About Our Farm, and Customize Your Farm Box. If you scroll down and see High Ground Organics underneath that, you could be forgiven for thinking that those links belonged to us. What's worse is that the name Farm Fresh to You sounds like it could be a slogan we might use, so people are understandably taken in by this and assume this is our farm, since they put OUR FULL FARM NAME into the browser.

This feels particularly upsetting because FFTY is at least 100 times our size. I will be looking into what it costs to block this sort of advertising from obscuring our online presence,

but it doesn't seem right to have to pay Google to do what it's supposed to do when someone wants to find our business online using our precise name.

I've spent some time this week looking through the Farm Fresh to You website. It's very nice. The 2nd generation farmer story is compelling. But the website does not make clear that FFTY is more of a produce delivery service than a true CSA. They talk a lot about "the farm," but, in fact, they pick up produce by the truckload from other large growers.

They talk about "local," but get produce from all over the state, and maybe beyond.

I'm sure the ability to customize the box is compelling for would-be subscribers too. Who wouldn't want to be able to replace something they don't like with something they do? But there's a big trade-off there. The only way to keep a variety of produce on hand for customers to have "choice" – and in order to send out the volume of deliveries that they do—is to maintain a large inventory.

When it comes to produce, inventory is the enemy of freshness. Vegetables start losing nutrients the moment they are picked. In fact, that is one of the main reasons people decide to join a CSA. If they wanted to simply choose their vegetables from a large inventory, they can go to a grocery store.

Are customers supporting small, local farms with FFTY? Well, some of the farms they buy from may be moderately sized. But FFTY no doubt takes a mark-up so those farmers are probably getting a wholesale price for their product. It may be helpful for those farms to sell their product to FFTY. But this is not the CSA model of direct to consumer sales, which gives the farmer and consumer both a fair price.

A behemoth that size simply cannot deliver what a CSA farm can: truly fresh locally grown organic produce. Unfortunately if they say it loud and often enough, many people will believe that it's true. And when discerning consumers try FFTY and decide the quality isn't that great, will they bother to try "another" CSA?

As always, we appreciate your support. And please remember, friends don't let friends buy

Farm Fresh to You.

Veggie Notes, by Jason Johnson

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

Some things in life are constant, and for me, one of those things is a lack of air-conditioning. I've just never really had

In The Box

Strawberries

Red OR Green Oak

Lettuce

Bunched Sorrel

Bunched Carrots

Green Onions

Broccoli OR Cauliflower

Green Cabbage

Parsley

Mixed Summer Squash OR

Padron OR Shishito

Peppers*

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

it. Growing up, summer was hot and humid and there was a strict embargo on any food that required an oven. Everything was cooked on the stove-top or on the grill. We ate light meals outside under shade trees and prayed for a breeze. Now, with temperatures slouching towards 100 degrees and the sun beating down on my aluminum home, I have slipped in to old habits and am better off for it.

A good loaf of bread and a brick of your favorite cheese will get you a long way. Lately, most of my meals have revolved around that. This week, I will be making a traditional French sorrel soup, with a side of blistered padrons, bread, and cheese. For the soup, melt about 3tbsp. of butter in a pan over medium heat. Chop and add your green onions. Salt and pepper. Cook for about five minutes, then add a quart of veggie stock, cover, and bring to a simmer. While you wait, go ahead and chop your sorrel, then add it, with a good pinch of salt, to the stock when it's ready. In a separate bowl, whisk together two egg yolks and a ½ cup of cream, then slowly whisk in a ladle of the soup. This prevents the egg from separating. When the soup is incorporated, whisk in 3tbsp. of flour and one more ladle of soup, maybe more. The result should be nice and thick. Add this back to the soup, stir, and cook for about 5 more minutes. Salt and pepper to taste. To blister your padrons, just cook them on medium high heat in a lightly oiled pan with plenty of salt and a bit of lemon juice. Cook until blackened on both sides, plate and sprinkle with a bit more salt. The lemony flavor of the sorrel (which is lessened by the cream and eggs) pairs well with the peppers, while the bread and cheese add welcomed reprieve when you come across the spicy pepper of the bunch.

Another great trick for warm weather eating is pesto, and not just the basil sort. We have a hard time keeping herbs fresh this time of year, so my partner, Hayley, tends to process them all at once. Pesto stores well in the fridge if you find a container that holds it exactly. If you have a lot of empty space at the top of your container, the air will oxidize the parsley, making it brown. If the container is full to the top, though, this is less of a problem. This is actually true for most things in your fridge, especially things like milk and yogurt. Food spoiling bacteria is airborne, so you want to keep downsizing containers as you use a product. As for the recipe at hand, pesto is not an exact science. You just need parsley, garlic (1-2 cloves), olive oil, and some sort of nut. Pine nuts, traditionally, but walnut work just as well. Just add the parsley, garlic, and a small handful of nuts to a food processor with ¼ - ½ cup of oil. Blend to desired texture. A pint mason jar should be perfect for storage. I like to keep this around for a filling lunch with bread and cheese. Maybe a few strawberries and a lettuce salad to balance things out. It is also fantastic on pasta.

Enjoy your veggies!

Roast Cabbage Wedges with Carrot Sauce, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 medium head cabbage	Neutral flavored oil such as grape seed or avocado oil, or light flavored olive oil, as needed
½ tsp. garlic powder if you wish	1 TBS fresh marjoram or oregano leaves, chopped, or 1 scant rosemary needles stripped from the branch
Salt and pepper to taste	1-2 cups Simple Carrot Sauce (See recipe on web)

Heat the oven to 425°F.

While oven heats, cut up the cabbage. Trim the stem flush to base and cut into 8 or 10 1½ to 2 inch wedges, trimming the core so it is just large enough to hold each wedge intact.,

Rub cabbage all over-including the rounded outer part of the head, with oil. Make sure you get a good amount on all over. Season with salt and pepper and dust with garlic powder.

Place cabbage wedges onto the lightly buttered or oiled sheet pan, scatter with half the herbs, and roast until tender, but showing browned spots on the edges and flats. Flip halfway through roasting the cabbage wedges and scatter the rest of the herbs onto the cabbage. After 30 minutes total cooking time the cabbage should be done-cooked through, tender but still retaining a little crispness, and golden and charred along the edges and on the flat “sides” of the wedges.

When done, remove from the oven and transfer to plates or a platter and pour the sauce over the wedges. Enjoy!

Serves: 4

Carrot Persillade, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 cup flat leaf parsley, mostly leaves	2 cloves garlic, minced finely/pulverized, but not smashed
1½ cups bread crumbs, preferably home made	Olive oil as needed
Salt and Pepper to taste, freshly fine ground preferred	½ tsp. fresh thyme, minced
1 cup (2-3 carrots) ground/finely chopped carrots	Optional: ¼ cup heaping shelled salted pistachios, chopped as finely as the carrots

Use the big hole of a box grater and not-your-sharpest knife to create a finely chopped meal a little coarser than the bread crumbs, or pulse in a food processor to get the same size. Be sure to pulse and scrape down, pulse and scrape down repeatedly to get these results. Scraping down is important. When you have gotten to the right size remove all but a couple tablespoons and chop/process to a fine wet mess, and then add to the rest of the carrots, being sure to scrape in any available liquid. Very lightly season with a little salt. Stir around, then reserve.

Using a very sharp knife, chop the parsley very finely and mix with the garlic.

Heat a large heavy skillet over medium heat.

Put the crumbs into a bowl and add a very small amount of olive oil. Use your fingers to toss the crumbs thoroughly. Add just enough oil so the crumbs are moist, but not wet. Add salt and pepper, and the thyme, to the crumbs and add to the hot pan. Stirring all the while, cook the crumbs until they are golden and smell toasty. Get a good golden brown color on them, and as soon as they are colored, empty the pan into a large bowl and toss and stir until cooled.

When cooled, add the persillade (parsley garlic mixture) and stir well to combine. Add in the carrots, stirring well. If using, add the pistachios. If the mixture seems dry, add a little olive oil until the mixture is moist like a damp sand, but not wet. Taste for seasoning. If salt is required, do not add until just before using the persillade or the parsley will blacken and the carrots may weep and the all crunch will be wiped out.

The persillade is ready to use. Store in a covered container until ready to use, or freeze.