



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 23, August 16th and 17th, 2017

Greenhouse Strategies, by Steve Pederson

One of the things I've learned over the years is that this profession really rewards those who are able to think and plan well in advance. Strawberries are a good example of this. To help control soil borne diseases, we grow our strawberries on a five year rotation, meaning that they won't be planted in the same place again for five seasons. In addition, because it also helps to control soil borne diseases, we like to plant broccoli in all or most of the strawberry plot in the season prior to planting. This requires us to know where the strawberries are going to be planted nearly a year in advance.

Another place we have to think well in advance is in the greenhouse. August and early September is the time that we wind down our transplant plantings. We tend to plant larger blocks and transition to varieties chosen to mature well in the shorter days and cooler temperatures of fall and winter. It works in our favor to plant large blocks because crops that mature coming into the cooler time of year are harvestable over a much longer period of time compared to those that mature in summer.

Cilantro, although it is usually direct seeded, is a good example of this. When it matures in June and July, cilantro is usually only harvestable over a ten day to two week period before it goes to seed. Cilantro that matures in November or December, in contrast, can be harvestable for up to two months. Because the soils here are often too wet to work up for planting between December and February, it really pays to make the last plantings of the year big ones. And that starts in the greenhouse now.

All this talk about winter shouldn't overshadow the fact that we are just getting into the heart of our summer produce. We are just starting to harvest the tomato field this week, and the field looks great.

Veggie Notes, by Jason Johnson

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

Flannery O'Connor once stated, "I am a writer because writing is what I do best."

I guess you could say I am the Flannery O'Connor of eating potatoes. I will eat a potato in any place and in any form. Baked, roasted, mashed, fried, especially fried. Sometimes I fry a potato after I roast it. Just to make sure it's the best version of itself. You have to always push yourself. Every tuber is a blank slate of starchy goodness, and it is our responsibility to bring out its full potential. I approach a bag of

potatoes the way Edward James Olmos approached Lou Diamond Phillips in *Stand and Deliver*. There will be no free rides. No excuses.

This week, let's fry those things. As I stated before, a favorite approach of mine is to roast them first to make sure they are cooked through. Cut them in to bite sized pieces, toss them in salt, pepper, and oil, then roast them at about 425 for about 35 minutes. When they are about five minutes out, bring a heavy skillet to medium heat and lightly oil. Add potatoes and some leek rounds, salt and pepper again. Cook until the leeks are nice and crispy, turning every few minutes. At the very end, add some minced basil and garlic. If you have any kale lying around, add that to the skillet before adding the potatoes and leeks. This lets any moisture cook out and lets the oil coat the kale. When the kale starts to wilt, continue the recipe. I like to serve this along with various other roasted veggies and some eggs. Those baby carrots would be nice roasted whole. You could just toss them in oil, salt, and pepper, and then put them on the same pan that held the potatoes. Pop them in the 425 degree oven and roast until the sauté is done. Plate beside the potatoes with a few slices of lightly salted tomato. Top your potatoes with a couple of over-easy eggs.

As for the rest of the ingredients, I think you should make a salad. Try quick-pickling your strawberries this week. First add 1 TBS of honey or sugar, 1 tsp of salt, and a ¼ cup of hot water to a 12-ounce mason jar (a pint mason jar will work, too). Stir until all ingredients are dissolved. Add ½ cup of apple cider vinegar and let cool to room temperature. Add 1 dried chili and about 1 ¾ cup of whole strawberries, tops still on, and let sit for an hour or up to 1 day. Make sure the berries are completely submerged in the brine. If not, add a bit of water or remove a couple berries.

While your berries are brining, chop and roast your beets then let them cool. When everything is ready, add strawberries and beets to a romaine salad with mozzarella chunks. Use a bit of the brine with some olive oil, salt, and pepper to lightly dress the salad.

Enjoy your veggies!

In The Box

Strawberries

Romaine OR Red Leaf
Lettuce

Basil

Baby Rainbow Carrots

Red OR Golden Beets

Leeks

Mixed Tomatoes

Potatoes

All produce is certified organic. Tomatoes are from High Ground Organics and Mariquita Farms. Potatoes are from Heirloom Organics. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

Classic Potato Leek Soup, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Probably the first soup I made. I remember thinking that I should make it because “Vichyssoise” was a funny name for a soup, and it was only much later (15 years?) that I learned that is the name for the cold version that has a dollop of cream added. This is one of those things that are easy to make, and it seems that if you are a person who uses leeks, there is always some in the refrigerator, just as there are always potatoes in the back of the pantry. This is my take on the classic from French cuisine.

3 medium sized leeks, (white and the tender green part) split, washed, and sliced finely	1 small-medium brown onion, peeled, split through the root and sliced finely
4 medium sized potatoes, such as Carola, peeled and halved lengthwise, then sliced ¼ inch thick	6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
Salt and white pepper to taste	Grapeseed, or other neutral flavored oil, as needed
2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter	¼ cup chervil leaves* or finely sliced chives

Heat a 3 to 4 quart pot over medium heat. When hot, liberally film the bottom of the pan with oil. When the oil is warm, add a tablespoon of butter. When it stops foaming, add the leeks and onions. Stir to coat with the oil.

Cook the alliums to wilt and soften, but do not allow them to color. If necessary, turn down the heat. Cook for 10 minutes or so, until tender.

Add the stock and the potatoes. Give a stir to be sure the potatoes are not stuck to the pan bottom. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a vigorous simmer and cook until the potatoes are tender, around 20-30 minutes.

When the potatoes are tender, use a wand mixer to puree the soup, or very carefully puree in a blender. (Fill the blender only 2/3rds full and cover the top with a towel and start on low speed. BE CAREFUL! The soup expands and can blow out under the lid spraying hot soup on you.) If you wish to enrich the soup, add in 2 tablespoons of butter while pureeing the soup.

Taste for seasonings and adjust if needed. If using chives, stir some into the soup, reserving some to garnish each bowl of soup. If using chervil, sprinkle chervil leaves over the soup just before service.

Serve in warmed bowls and pass croutons on the side.

Chef's notes:

*Chervil is a feathery looking herb that has a slight anise/licorice flavor and can be hard to come by here in the USA. If you do have it, use sharp scissors to cut it rather than a knife for ease. If you do not have chervil, chives are excellent as well. Tarragon can be used to approximate the chervil, but go light and cut it finely.

Hot variations are many with this soup. A traditional one is to take a cup of sorrel leaves and slice them into a fine chiffonade and add them in when you puree the soup. The heat of the soup will cook the leaves. You could add watercress

leaves or arugula for a “same but different” effect. If I did the arugula, I would drizzle the top of the soup with a little flavorful Extra Virgin Olive oil at service. Non-traditional variations would be to add some truffle oil to the soup as you puree it, dust the top of the soup with powdered dried craterellus mushroom. A more robust version could be made by adding a little bacon at the beginning and cooking the alliums in the fat, and then floating a crouton with melted cheddar on the top of the soup.

Salad of Romaine Hearts, Cherry Tomatoes and Scallions with Basil Vinaigrette, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

2 romaine lettuce hearts, leaves separated, broken in half, and cleaned	2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved through the stem
Half a bunch of scallions, trimmed, whites and greens separated	Salt and pepper to taste (coarse grained salt such as Maldon preferred)
1 cup Basil Vinaigrette, or as needed (see recipe)	¼ cup pine nuts
½ to 1 cup buffalo mozzarella or grated Romano or Parmesan (1 cup mozzarella, ½ cup Romano or Parmesan)	

Cut the whites of the scallions on a steep diagonal into 1/8th inch slices and toss with the tomatoes. Slice the greens as thinly as you can on a steep diagonal and reserve.

Put the lettuce into a large bowl and drizzle with just enough dressing to lightly coat. Toss to dress the lettuce and distribute amongst 4 plates.

Drizzle the onions and tomatoes with a little dressing and toss gently to coat, then evenly distribute onto the lettuce.

Season with a little salt and pepper. If using, scatter with the cheese and nuts.

Basil Vinaigrette, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

¼ cup basil leaves, packed (Try for the most tender leaves, usually from the ends)	¼ cup white wine vinegar
1/8th cup agave syrup or sugar	½ teaspoon Dijon style mustard
Pinch each salt and fresh finely ground pepper	¾ cup light flavored olive oil, or a mixture of olive oil and grape seed oil (if you only have strong flavored oil)

Put all ingredients except the oil into a blender. Puree for 30 seconds to 1 minute until no discernible chunks of leaf are left.

As soon as the leaves are well pureed, remove the plug from the center of the top and in a thin stream, drizzle in the oil until the dressing is fully emulsified. You will know when this is by watching the “whirlpool” that has formed disappear. Another way to say this is that the hole in the liquid in the center of the blender fills in when you have just the right amount of oil.

Dressing will keep 3-5 days in the refrigerator.