



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 24, August 24th and 25th, 2016

Farm Notes, by Stephen Pedersen

Without a doubt it has been one of the coolest summers I can remember in some time. Nearly every morning has been damp and drizzly, and if the sun comes out at all it is only for a few hours in the afternoon. For some crops these conditions can be problematic—downy mildew has set in to some of our lettuce, cucumbers and basil crops. Other heat loving plants like tomatoes, peppers and squash just slow way down. There are, however, crops that love it cool and damp and of these, the broccoli and cauliflower in your boxes this week are fine examples. If conditions are too warm when broccoli is maturing, it tends to “button up” prematurely and form heads that are small and uneven. In cool weather like we have now they form larger, denser, dome-shaped heads with creamy, light green stalks. Cauliflower plants tend to remain closed with their inner leaves wrapped tightly around the developing heads keeping them white and dense rather than discolored and “ricey” when it is hot. Both crops develop more slowly under cool conditions which gives us a larger window to harvest them in.

One of the biggest benefits to these cool damp conditions, however, is in the area of pest control. There is a naturally occurring fungus called *beauveria bassiana* that exists in the soils around here. When conditions are just right—damp and drizzly—it infects certain insects and causes a disease called white muscardine which can wipe out an aphid infestation almost overnight. Compared to the various organic soaps that I have tried over the years, *beauveria* is much more effective—and it doesn’t cost a thing.

To help address the strawberry quality issue we’ve been having, we took out our half-acre of Sweet Anne strawberries. The Sweet Annes are really nice early in the spring, but they become too soft and watery in the summer and we switch to picking exclusively Albions. An untended field can become a breeding ground for pests, so we’re hopeful that discing in this field will knock back the spotted wing drosophila. We also made a single pass over the remaining berry fields with an organic microbial spray.

Unlike conventional pesticides that can persist for weeks or are systemically absorbed by the plant, this spray breaks down quickly, and at the very small amount we applied--about 2 oz per acre--residues are not an issue. We are also adding supplemental calcium to the irrigation water. Calcium improves fruit quality and keeps the fruit from breaking down as fast. With these measures, we expect the strawberry quality to bounce back to normal. Apologies to those of you whose berries went off quicker than usual the last couple weeks.

Elsewhere on the farm, we have reached the point in the year when we mostly stop planting new starts for this season. We’ll start planting again for next season sometime in November. The pumpkins and hard squash are sizing up nicely in the field. In another few weeks we will cut off the water and let the plants dry down and the squash fully cure before cutting them off the vines and packing them in crates. We are making some of our last, large plantings of roots vegetables like beets, carrots and black radishes which will carry us deep into fall and winter.

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated except tomatoes.

Good morning!

It is "Back to School" time around my household, so it is nice to see so many items from the box that can go in kids' lunches. Of course, quartered **strawberries** are always a "win". These sweet red rubies are a great source of Vitamin C and antioxidants for the upcoming cold season. **Broccoli** and **cauliflower** (also surprisingly high in Vitamin C) can be cut into small florets so that tiny fingers can dip them raw (or blanched) into some homemade ranch dressing. Or they can be married together in a jar of quickles for a sweet and tangy treat. **Tomatoes** can be sliced and salted for a stand-alone snack, combined with the **Red Oak lettuce** for a simple salad or stacked atop sliced lunch meat or tuna in a sandwich.

Broccoli and **cauliflower** can extend their reign in the "half-pint" department for dinners as well. Who doesn't love roasted florets sprinkled with sea salt and your favorite herbs and spices? Take those florets one step further into a blended soup with leeks caramelized in clarified butter and a big spoonful of Better than Bouillon. Of course, the extremely picky kids will want them simply steamed to perfection (not too mushy, not too firm!) and placed on their plate carefully so that they do not, under any circumstance, touch any of the other items on the plate! If you are a stealthy parent, you can blend or rice that **cauliflower** to a form that is impossible to identify as a vegetable

and slyly bake it into your mac'n'cheese like Michelle Obama does. I am happy that, for the most part, my "Little" has passed the extreme pickiness stage and has moved into the moderate pickiness stage that does not require a separate kid-centered meal or special placement on the plate or the brief phase where she could only eat food shaped like dinosaurs. Either by laziness or stubbornness, I serve her what the grown-ups get, with an occasional kid-friendly meal for everyone. I think that has helped her expand her "acceptable to eat

- Strawberries
- Broccoli
- Tomatoes
- Cauliflower
- Escarole
- Red Oak Lettuce
- Green OR Rainbow Chard
- Mystery

Everything is certified organic. All vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

repertoire" and I am surprised all the time at what she will try now.

The **escarole**, on the other hand, I would reserve for the more distinguished tastes. It's not that a kid couldn't love escarole, but they may just experience it in an even more intensified way than us fellow grown-ups. It turns out that kids actually have about twice as many taste buds as adults, so they actually taste any bitterness in vegetables with at least twice as much intensity as we do. So, even vegetables such as chard and kale, what adults may consider very mildly bitter, if at all, will be bitter on a whole different scale to those little tots. Not that you can't make them try at least one bite, though! Just to be polite, and to never give up trying new things!

The **tomatoes** in your CSA box are "New Girls" and Momotaros. New Girl is an Early Girl-type and the Momotaros are a Japanese variety that has a slightly pinkish color and a wonderful sweet flavor.

Enjoy your veggies!

Bulk Tomatoes Available on Web Store

We continue to offer tomatoes in bulk from Mariquita Farm through the web store. For next week we are adding the option of heirloom tomatoes, so stay tuned! The web store will only have tomatoes available to order Friday afternoon through Monday evening, so be sure to check during that time.

Chef's Notes, by Andrew Cohen

A slight chilling at night has my primal-self thinking of fall apparently. The **Escarole** Potato gratin is clear evidence of that to me. The escarole and onions provide a lovely silky mess that goes so well with the creamy texture of the potatoes, and the slightly bitter edge of **escarole** is just right for cutting into the sweetness of onion and potato and the richness of Gruyère. For all that, using stock instead of cream lends a lightness to the dish.

The Tomato Curry **Cauliflower**, with a sweet curry and coconut milk is a good way to get kids and cauliflower haters to try some. You could add garbanzo or kidney beans, or tofu to the dish to make it more substantial if you wish. One dish that did not make it to bits and bytes is a dry gratin with thin slabs of **cauliflower** with slices of **tomato** and a base of onions bakes with a drizzle of good oil and a scattering of herbs such as basil or marjoram.

I recently saw a recipe that intrigued me where a chef blanched **chard** in water flavored with kombu. I see it with a full on dashi--the Japanese broth that is the base for miso soup--using plenty of kombu and smoky bonito flakes for the poaching broth. I could see this with a whole oven-roasted **cauliflower** head smeared with a miso marinade that will crisp up once the top is taken off the cooking vessel it steams in. Also, a stew of **chard**, **cauliflower**, and **broccoli** with a miso soup style braise with tofu, carrots, and a little sesame oil would be quite nice.

With both **broccoli** and **cauliflower**, you are liable to wind up with a fair amount of core on your cutting board. DO NOT discard these as they are perfect for making quickles from. They also make an excellent slaw- see site for a couple iterations, as well as ideas for **escarole**.

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

Tomato Curry Cauliflower, from Chef Andrew Cohen

If you wish to save time, you can skip sautéing the cauliflower, although it does add a great extra layer of flavor.

1 lb. tomatoes, peeled, seeded over a sieve and bowl (save the liquid, discard the seeds) and cut into medium dice	1 medium tomato, seeded and cut into ¼ inch dice
1 head cauliflower, florets only, cut into 1 inch bits (reserve the center stalk for something else, like quickles)	1 medium yellow or white onion, cut into medium dice
2 cloves garlic, minced	2-4 slices peeled ginger, 1/2 x 3/8 inch
½ tsp. coriander seed, powdered	½ TBS, or as needed, "sweet" tasting mild garam masala (curry powder)
4-8 ounces coconut milk, as needed (this will depend on how big the head of cauliflower is)	Grapeseed, avocado, or sunflower oil as needed
Salt and pepper to taste	1 heaping ½-cup cilantro leaves
Raw or toasted cashews if you wish, around ¼ cup	

Heat a 10-inch sauteuse or chef's pan over medium-high heat and get pan very hot. Film pan generously with oil. While oil heats, put cauliflower into a bowl and scatter with some garam masala. When oil starts to show wisps of steam rising up, add curry powder to pan. Season cauliflower with salt and pepper. Carefully add cauliflower to hot oil and cook just long enough to brown the outsides of the florets and soften them a little. Remove from the oil and set aside on paper towels to drain.

Make sure there is still oil in the pan and add the rest of the garam masala and the ground coriander. Stir a few seconds until aromatic. Add the onions and toss to coat well with the aromatics.

Cook a couple minutes until the onions start to soften up. When onions are translucent, add the garlic and ginger and toss to combine. When they are aromatic, add the reserved tomato liquid and add the peeled diced tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Stir with a wooden spoon, tossing and stirring to break up the tomatoes. When the tomatoes are cooked through, breaking down, and starting to lose liquid, add the smaller amount of coconut milk, and stir. Continue stirring to break down the tomatoes and integrate with the coconut milk. Looking at the pile of cauliflower decide if you have enough liquid to cover the cauliflower almost to the top. If not, add more coconut milk and stir in. If there is enough, add the cauliflower and reduce heat to a very gentle simmer. Cook cauliflower just until the florets are tender and then use a slotted spoon to transfer to a bowl. Turn heat to high under the sauce and cook down until thickened enough to leave a trace on a spoon back when you run a finger through it. Taste sauce and adjust as needed. Remove from the heat, and stir in most of the cilantro. Add cauliflower and swirl around. Pour into a bowl or a serving platter and scatter with ¼ inch tomato dice. If you wish to add an extra dimension in the form of crunch, scatter raw or toasted cashew nuts over the dish. Scatter with the last of the cilantro. Serve hot.

Serves: 4