



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 24, August 26th and 27th, 2015

Help Us Reduce Packaging Waste, by Jeanne Byrne

For awhile now we've been exploring ways to become more environmentally sound in our packaging. The waxed cardboard boxes we use to deliver CSA produce can be used several times, but the fact is, the boxes are not recyclable because of the wax coating and end up comprising a large portion of our landfill bulk from the farm. We've used the plastic liner bags to keep the produce fresh and to make the boxes last longer, but even with the bags, which also become part of the waste stream, we get between 4 and 10 uses out of each box. Last winter we asked around to other farms who have switched to plastic delivery crates and got a good report on crates from a company called Orbis. Reports from Full Belly Farm were that not a single crate broke during the two years they had used them. The crates nest inside each other when empty, but have flaps that close the top so that they are stackable for delivery. When the end of life does come for these crates, the manufacturer will take back any broken containers and grind them down to use again, which makes them fully recyclable.

The difficulty comes in the initial purchase price of about \$12 per crate. In the long run, using the crates will be cost-effective for us, because we will no longer need to buy the waxed boxes over and over again, which now cost over \$2 apiece. However for the initial purchase we need to buy two crates for every CSA subscriber, because we leave one at the site each week and pick it up with the next delivery. With a little buffer for our numbers to go up a bit and to take advantage of price breaks for buying in bulk, we should buy about 1400-1500 crates for \$16,800-\$18,000.

We want to go ahead with this switch, but we have some unexpected big expenses coming up, namely drilling a new well for our home farm property. We do not have the extra cash right now to make this purchase without your help. That's why we are asking you to help us out if you can, so we can finally move along with this plan.

Please contribute to our crate-funding project at worthwild.com/initiatives/53. A suggested donation of \$25 covers a single subscriber's crate cost and we will throw in a High Ground Organics re-usable grocery bag as a gift. You can use it to carry your CSA produce home in! (But you don't have to be a current CSA member to donate.) We appreciate all your help as we move towards less packaging waste.

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Storage: Everything should be refrigerated, except **tomatoes**. Always rinse produce before use.

This week, we are bringing in a treat from the Coke Farm: **eggplant!** **Eggplant** is a member of the nightshade family, and, like **tomatoes** and peppers, considered botanically a "fruit," but prepared and used as a vegetable. The tiny seeds are a bit bitter because they contain some nicotine alkaloids, (but don't worry, you would have to eat 20 lbs of eggplant to equal the nicotine in a cigarette). Some of the European varieties had a small white or yellow fruit that resembled an egg, thus the name, but the more common varieties are larger and purple, like the Globe variety we are offering this week.

Tomatoes continue to hold their space in the box. They are going to play well with the eggplant and basil. If you don't have other plans for them, Andrew is offering a nice braise this week, or you can go the direction of a curry, **eggplant** Parmesan, ratatouille, or even caprese.

Have you been on the "**kale** bandwagon"? What's all the hubbub about? Either we just like rooting for the underdog with this tough leafy green, or maximum nutrition per square inch is at the top of our priority list -- a cup of kale provides 3g protein, 2.5 g fiber, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins A, K, C, folates, lutein, zeaxanthin, etc. **Red cabbage** is another superhero in my book.

Big ole' **Chantenay carrots** will sweeten up your life this week. These guys are known for their sweet appeal. With school starting this week for many of our kids, carrot sticks is a "go-to" for packed lunch vegetable consumption for our minis.

The inner leaves of **escarole** can be eaten raw, and its delicate bitterness will stimulate appetite and digestion. The outer leaves can be cooked down with rich flavors or soups.

Beet juice may look like a vampire's breakfast, but even with its blood-like appearance, it turns around and provides a benefit to your own blood, improving blood flow, balancing oxygen, and lowering blood pressure. Be well!

Cooking Notes, by Andrew Cohen

In doing the recipes for this week I noticed I was using my oil sprayers more than usual, cooking a lot of things for the grill. Using a sprayer allows for using less oil for porous vegetables such as eggplant and summer squash by giving a uniform coating without dunking directly into oil, which could

This Week

Eggplant*

Mixed Tomatoes

Lacinato Kale OR Red
Cabbage

Chantenay Carrots

Escarole

Red Beets

Red Oak OR Red Leaf Lettuce

Genovese Basil

Mystery

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

saturate the vegetable and leave you without oil at the end. Saturation can also lead to a flare-up on the grill and scorched and soggy vegetables. You can find oil sprayers cheaply enough at Ross, Marshall's, and Costco.

Eggplant is really hitting its stride right now. The **tomato** braised eggplant can be served as a side or starter, but would also work as a pasta sauce quite well. You could build a babaganoush with pomegranate molasses and yogurt in lieu of tahini, or you could go Thai and curry it with coconut milk and spices. Salt and fry slices and fill them with a mixture of lamb, onions, and, feta and roast them for a little pocket of wonderful flavors. The **lacinato** finds itself paired with coins of sweet and earthy **Chantenay carrots** cooked in smoky sweet bacon fat (or a vegetarian replacement of smoked paprika and maple syrup). This dish serves as a side, or with the addition of King Oyster mushrooms it feels meaty. Add some cooked barley or farro for a more substantial dish. Other dishes this box conjures to mind are a salad of **carrot** strips with strips or roasted quickled **beets**, or a simple **beet** and **lettuce** salad with blue cheese and nuts. **Tomatoes** and **basil** say Insalata Caprese to me, and cutting the **tomatoes** and cheese into small cubes makes it easier to eat it without a knife. Slicing the cheese and tomato into round slices with a leaf sandwiched in between and stacking it on grilled slices of country bread makes for great cocktail or sundown nibbles. Be sure to use great olive oil and balsamic dressing for this.

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

Tomato Braised Eggplant and Mushrooms with Basil, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

2 medium eggplant, cut into ¾ inch cubes	3-4 cups firm button mushrooms, cut into ¾ inch wedges
4 cups tomatoes, seeded and cut into ¼ inch dice	1 small onion, cut into fine dice
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced	1 TBS fresh marjoram, finely chopped (if you have it)
10 basil leaves, cut into fine chiffonade	Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil as needed	½ cup red wine
Water as needed	

Put the eggplant into a large strainer or colander in the sink, and salt lightly over all. Allow to drain for 20 minutes or so, then pat dry with paper towels or a clean kitchen towel. When dry, place the eggplant into a large non-reactive bowl and spray all over with oil. Season with pepper.

Heat a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Film generously with oil and get oil quite hot, almost smoking. Carefully add eggplant to the pan. Do not crowd it, and allow space between the cubes. Cook, tossing until the cubes are golden all over, but do not cook all the way through. Remove to the colander and continue as above for the rest of the eggplant. While the eggplant cooks, put the mushrooms in the non-reactive bowl and spray generously with oil all over.

When the eggplant is all cooked, make sure there is oil on the pan bottom and it is warm. Add the mushrooms and toss to coat with the oil and sauté until they are colored on all surfaces. Season with salt and pepper and cook until tender, and add half the red wine. Cook the mushrooms until tender all the way through and the wine has been absorbed. Remove to the colander with the eggplant.

Add the onions to the pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook until the onions are quite tender. Add the garlic and the marjoram if using and stir until fragrant. Add 3 cups of the tomatoes and half the basil. Sauté 1 minute, then add the rest of the wine. Sauté until the tomatoes render down to a sauce-like consistency. Taste for seasoning. Add salt and pepper if needed, or a touch of sugar if the sauce is acidic, or a splash of red wine vinegar if the sauce tastes flat.

Add the mushrooms and eggplant to the pot, and gently stir in. Add any juices that may have accumulated, stir in, then add the tomato dice to the pot with the rest of the basil. Gently stir, then cook just long enough to heat the eggplant and mushrooms through, but not so long the last addition of tomato starts to cook and lose shape and vibrancy.

Serve hot or room temperature. Serves: 4

Lacinato, Carrots, Braised with Bacon, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

2 strips bacon, cut into ¼ inch batons (use a thicker-cut, slightly fatty bacon, not the thin kind)	1 bunch lacinato kale, stemmed, torn or cut into bite-size pieces, and washed and drained
4-5 carrots (~2 cups) cleaned and cut into ¼ inch coins	½ medium yellow onion, finely diced
1 clove garlic, minced	1" fresh rosemary tip, whole
Salt and pepper to taste	Olive oil as needed
Water as needed	¼ cup full bodied red wine
1 TBS red wine vinegar if needed	

Heat a 10 inch sauteuse or skillet with lid over medium heat. When the pan is warm, add the bacon and cook until crisp and the fat has rendered. Be sure to not burn the bacon, and crisp it all over. When done, remove with a slotted spoon to a paper towel to drain. Check the pan; the bottom should be well covered. If not, add some olive oil to ensure it is. When the oil is hot, add the rosemary sprig. Cook, turning, until the oil is quite fragrant. Avoid burning the rosemary. When the oil is infused remove the rosemary.

Raise the heat to medium-high and then carefully add the carrots. Cook the carrots, turning as needed, to color them on the cut surfaces until they are golden turning brown. Push to the perimeter of the pan and lower heat to medium-low.

Add the onion and cook until translucent, stirring to prevent coloring. Add the garlic and stir in. When fragrant, toss with the carrots to combine ingredients and season with salt and pepper. Add ¼ cup water and place the top on. Simmer for a couple minutes, then check to be sure the pan isn't dry and check the progress of the carrots. When they are almost cooked through but not quite done, check that there is still some oil in the pan, and add some if needed.

Add the kale and use tongs to turn the vegetables in the pan to mix them and get the kale to the bottom. Add the wine and cover the pan. Cook until the lacinato wilts down, stirring with tongs to coat all the kale with the liquid in the pan. If pan runs dry, add more wine in small amounts. Cook just until the kale wilts and is tender enough to eat.

Taste for seasoning and, if you think a splash of tartness would be good, drizzle vinegar over the vegetables. Season if needed. Toss vegetables to mix well, then scatter the reserved cooked bacon over the vegetables and serve hot. Serves: 4

Chef's Notes: If you do not eat bacon, use 1 tsp of Pimenton de la Vera Dulce and 1 tsp maple syrup at the beginning.