



High Ground Organics

Community Supported Agriculture

Week 28, September 23rd and 24th, 2015

Turkeys in the Straw, by Jeanne Byrne

Well, the wild turkeys seem to have established residency for the time being on our home farm, so I've been reading up on them to try to determine whether we should consider them friend or foe.

First of all, my cursory research on wild turkeys unearthed some controversy over whether they should be considered non-native or native (reintroduced) to California. Apparently the range of the modern wild turkey species *Meleagris gallopavo* did not reach to California though it covered most of eastern and mid-western U.S. at the time of Columbus. However the fossil record does show a now-extinct separate species of turkey in southern California (*Meleagris californica*), and another fossil from northern California may be either *M. gallopavo* or *M. californica*. So even if the wild turkey hasn't been in California in recent history, it, or an ancestor, was here in the Pleistocene. So it should not be considered non-native in the same way the European Starling is non-native. The turkeys living here today are *M. gallopavo* and were first introduced on Santa Cruz Island in 1877, and onto the mainland as a game bird starting in 1908.

I'm encouraged when I read that turkeys' primary foods are fresh grass and insects, (though some articles suggest they actually eat a wide range of vegetation). This meshes with the habits I've observed. I often see the turkeys on the edges of our planted fields, scratching in the grassy areas where we had oat or barley cover crops planted. A Purdue University entomologist even states that wild turkeys can serve a helpful role in insect pest control on farms and have been used in the south to control hornworms in tobacco fields. The turkeys also eat seeds, so they may be having a positive effect by scratching around and eating weed seeds. (Steve feels that I am being overly optimistic here.)

A UC Davis paper on crop damage by wild turkeys was also encouraging. The main complaints about wild turkey damage was from wine grape growers, with evidence that turkeys do eat grapes. Some farmers also complain about crop damage in corn, soybeans, alfalfa and oats. None of these are crops that we grow. On the other hand, turkeys eat a wide variety of pest insects including beetles, true bugs, grasshoppers, and apparently anything they can catch. So, my main question at this point is this:

"Will they eat Bagrada Bugs???"

Veggie Notes, by Chrissi Brewer

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

Hi all, well it's fun to be "back in the saddle again"! Chrissi Brewer here, writing Sarah's column while she is out having a little vacation. Don't worry, she will be back next week.

As I have told MANY people MANY times, High Ground has the **BEST lettuce** of any one. This week is either the **Green Oak or the Little Gem**. The **Little Gem** is a cross between a Butter lettuce and a Romaine lettuce. They are like miniature romaine-looking heads that combine a uniquely sweet, buttery taste with perfectly shaped elongated leaves. This specialty romaine variety has been European favorite for over 20 years.

The **tomatoes** are especially tasty this year...and what a treat the mixed tomatoes are. There may be **tomatoes** for that perfect BLT or amazing little jewels for a lovely Salad of Grilled **Little Gem Lettuce** and **Tomatoes** or use a little of everything for the Mixed **Tomato** Salad with Dill. Whatever your pleasure, the tomatoes are a treasure! (This just in: Wednesday's tomatoes will be **San Marzano** sauce tomatoes from Mariquita Farm.)

The **Chantenay carrots** are always my faves. They are the ones that totally surprise you. They are big and sometimes we erroneously equate big with tough...au contraire! These **carrots** are sweet and tender and you almost feel guilty eating something that sweet as a vegetable. As an added bonus, **carrots** provide the highest content of vitamin A of all the vegetables. What a combo! And another wonderful pairing for those Little Gems is Grilled **Little Gem** Wedges with Candied **Carrots** and Hazelnuts.

I'm always glad to see a **bok choy** in the CSA box because many times in our busy

lives we enter the kitchen and say, "Oh my gosh, what are we going to have for dinner tonight?" These wonderful little members of the Brassica family, provide the answer to the quick dinner dilemma. A delicious **Mei Quin Choi** with Cashews is perfect for a yummy quick nutritious meal. I also love that when I "google" Mei Quin Choi, High Ground Organics is the first hit on the page.

To make that quick stir fry into a more perfect meal, we have the **Tokyo Market turnips** included in the box this week. These small mild turnips have sweet flavor and tender white flesh and the greens are perfect for using in a salad or

This Week

Little Gem OR Green Oak Leaf
Lettuce

Mixed Tomatoes*

Chantenay Carrots

Mei Quin Choi

Tokyo Market Turnips

Broccoli OR Green Cabbage

Mixed Peppers (Shishito,
Hungarian Hot Wax, or Corno
Di Toro)

Mystery

Everything is certified organic. San Marzano tomatoes are from Mariquita Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

stir fry. The size and sweetness also make a great combo for caramelizing. Try the Caramelized Tokyo Turnips!

With this hot weather on us, our household has been trying to keep the house as cool as possible, so that means lots of cold salads and meals on the BBQ. A **Broccoli Slaw** or **cabbage** slaw are wonderful ways to liven up your outside patio dinner and keep the heat down.

The mixed peppers are fun this week. We get to try the new **Shishito** variety (like a Padron!). Please don't mistake the **Hungarian Hot Wax peppers** as a new treatment for the exterior of your car. They may look like a mild mannered banana pepper, but the Hungarian wax pepper has a lot more bite. In terms of spiciness, it's more akin to a jalapeño. So even though we are trying to keep the "caliente" out of the house, we don't want to exclude the "picante" out of the kitchen.

Cooking Notes, by Andrew Cohen

Hot weather can cause appetites to flag, so spicy foods or those with some sharpness like pickles are good to perk those appetites right up. Think about it; where do all the worlds' spiciest foods come from? Chilies originated in the Amazon where it is hot and humid. Mexico, India, Szechuan, South East Asia, the Middle East and Africa. All have spicy cuisine, all are hot. They also have a lot of things like pickles, chutneys, etc. that spark the palate as well. All this by way of excusing the inundation of quickles this week. There are recipes for quickled carrots, turnips, and broccoli. They all feature in something, but would be nice to have just as vegetables along with some lettuce topped with cold lentil and grain salad or egg or tuna salad. The Roasted Pepper Dressing is nice with the salad, but you can use another slightly sweet dressing to go on the salad if roasting the peppers sounds like work. By the way, shishito peppers are the Japanese version of padrons, but there are spicy ones. They are often served along with beer or sake at izakayas (Japanese pubs) and yakitori joints, and are typically grilled and then served with a dusting of crunchy sea salt. The pepper dressing can be used as a dip for crudité or drizzled onto bread and tomatoes. Make it spicy and use a squeeze bottle to garnish plates and dishes with it. The Quickled Broccoli is for a salad made with the broccoli, carrots cut into thin strands with a Ben Riner, and shreds of cabbage dressed with Simple White Balsamic Vinaigrette and topped with tomato dice and sunflower seeds. This is pretty straight forward, and I ran out of time to type it up. The Braised Mei Quin, Carrots, and Turnips is a brightly flavored dish that fares well as a side dish, a base for some grilled fish or poultry, or tossed with some noodles. If you are feeling like being adventurous, and have the grill running, remember that Little Gem lettuce is good grilled. Split it and then oil it all over, getting some in between the leaves, and grill just long enough to char it in spots but not render all the leaves limp and lifeless. The charring brings out both the bitter quality inherent in lettuce, as well as the sweetness that people might not notice as much. Use this in a salad of grilled peppers and rotisserie chicken or do a Caesar salad with shards of romano instead of grated parmesan. Chop the lettuce and use it to stuff pita with along with tomatoes and falafels. It is also nice as is with a drizzle of good balsamic vinegar or some Primitivizia Mugolio (This is a thick pine cone bud syrup that taste of alpine forests to me) and pine nuts.

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

Braised Mei Quin, Carrot, and Tokyo Turnip

Light in flavor with a bit of heft, use this as a side or a base for something like grilled fish or poultry. You could combine it with noodles if you wanted — something like ramen or soba, or bucatini would be good.

1 bunch mei quin, each head halved lengthwise and rinsed	1 bunch (around 2 cups cut up) Tokyo turnips, cut into ½ inch wedges (save greens for another dish)
2-4 large to medium (2-3 heaping cups cut carrot) Chantenay carrots, scrubbed and cut into ¼ inch coins	½ large yellow onion cut through root, sliced Lyonnaise 1/8th inch
1 medium fresh clove garlic, minced	1 tablespoon fresh marjoram
1 cup white wine such as grenache blanc, sauvignon blanc, etc.	2 cups vegetable stock
Neutral flavored oil or a very light flavored olive oil as needed	1 lemon for juice, Meyer type preferred
Salt and pepper as to taste	

Heat a large sauteuse or sauté pan with a tight fitting lid over medium heat. When hot, film with oil and heat the oil. When it starts to shiver, add the mei quin cut side down and cook just long enough to give a little color. Remove from the pan and reserve.

If needed, add a little oil to the pan so there is a good slick, turn up the heat to medium-high, and heat up. Add the carrots, season with a little salt and pepper, and sauté to color both sides of the carrot coins a nice golden with a little browning/blistering. Remove and keep separate from the mei quin.

There should still be oil in the pan, but if not, film. Add the turnips and sauté to just lightly color the cut sides. When the turnips are lightly golden, transfer to a container separate from the others.

Lower heat to medium. Add the onions to the pan and cook until translucent, but do not allow them to color. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and softening, but do not allow to color. Add half the marjoram, toss to combine, then add the wine and the carrots. Put the top on the pan and cook 3-5 minutes, until the wine reduces by half. The carrots should no longer be raw tasting in the center.

Add the turnips, and then the stock. Bring to a simmer and cover the pan. Cook covered 5-8 minutes. Taste a carrot and turnip. Once they are almost completely tender, lay the mei quin on top and re-cover the pan. Cook 4-5 minutes, just until the mei quin cooks through and turns a nice jade green. Season all with a little salt and pepper and toss to combine. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the vegetables to a platter, and then add the rest of the herbs to the pan and turn up the heat to high. Reduce the remaining liquid to a third cup or so, and then pour over the vegetables.

Squeeze lemon juice over the platter and toss to mix evenly. Serve hot.

Chef's Notes: If you wish, you could take this in an Easterly direction by using some ginger, removing the marjoram and white wine, and subbing in a ¼ cup sake and 1 tablespoon mirin. Add some soy sauce. Use could use sesame oil if you wish, or chili flakes or gochugaru. Combine this dish with noodles if you wish. Add some rotisserie chicken shreds if you have them for an all-in-one pot dish when it is hot. You can use water if you do not have vegetable stock although the flavor will be milder.

Serves: 4

Source: Chef Andrew E Cohen