



High Ground Organics

Community Supported Agriculture

Week 30, October 7th 8th, 2015

Farm Update, by Steve Pedersen

Work on our new well here at our home site has officially begun. Last Friday the drilling company moved all of their equipment over in a caravan. It looked like the fun-zone of a small town carnival had come to set itself up on our farm. After a day of site prep and set up, they will begin to drill in earnest today. The first step is to drill a small diameter exploratory hole. Then they run an "E-log" which measures the resistance of the substrate material that the hole passes through and is able to determine where the water bearing formations are. They are also able to measure water quality in terms of total dissolved solids (TDS) at various depths. In general, the water at the shallower aquifers has higher TDS and nitrate levels than those at greater depths. Wells in our area that are dedicated for drinking water can be from 500-1000 feet deep. In our case, the driller believes we should find good irrigation water at around the 240 foot level.

Once they find good water, they go back and effectively re-drill the original exploratory well with a special bit that greatly increases its diameter. They then install the well casing—8 inch for us—and backfill around the outside of it with sand below and concrete for the last 100 feet or so. How long it takes depends on what they have to drill through. Without a lot of rocks or sticky clay to slow things down, they can do up to 50 feet in a day. The good news is that it appears increasingly likely that we will have a good source of water to irrigate our new strawberry field with when we start planting in late November.

And speaking of next season's strawberries, field prep has gone well and we are looking to list up new beds this Thursday or Friday. We are doing the Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation method on one acre this year and have a big pile of rice bran in front of our packing shed waiting to be spread. This is a technique that originated in Japan, on which our friend Joji Muramoto and his colleagues at UCSC have been doing research for the past several years. We'll talk more about that in a future newsletter.

Meanwhile, this year's berry patch has slowed way down but we're still getting some fruit out of it, and another stretch of warm weather may extend the season for a couple more weeks. At this time of year, we're shuffling fields around to plant the winter crops and next year's berries. It's a little more complicated now that we don't have the Redman field to rotate crops into, but we're assembling the puzzle pieces and figuring out where everything is going to be growing for the next season.

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

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

If you received **strawberries** last week, you'll likely get **apples** this week and vice versa. **Apples** originated in Central Asia, and have been cultivated for thousands of years both in Asia and Europe, but were only brought to North America in the 17th century, so they are not really "as American as apple pie" as you might think, although the **Pippins** beg to differ. In

fact, it is reported that both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew Pippins. These are crisp, tart apples, perfect for baking or snacking.

You know you are in the "shoulder season" when you get both **summer squash** and **winter squash** in your box. The term "**winter squash**" is kind of deceptive. All squash is frost sensitive, so both **winter squash** and **summer squash** are grown when the weather is temperate. The difference lies in the fact that you eat summer squash soon after harvest when the skins are still soft (i.e. summer), whereas winter squash is left for awhile to mature, therefore can be enjoyed during the winter months.

Butternut squash is a favorite, not only because you get more "bang for your buck" in terms of quantity of squash per square inch, but also because the skin is not terribly hard, so you can get through it easily with a sharp knife and/or peeler. Be very careful please!

Last week I received some San Marzano **tomatoes** in my box and I made some tomato paste. It's really not that hard. You just have to boil the tomatoes until they split, then transfer to

cool water, slip the skins off, squeeze the tomatoes gently to get most of the seeds/water out, and blend to a nice puree. The next step involves reducing the water content out which can happen over the stove for a bit, then in the oven for awhile to get that nice roasted flavor. Sometimes I feel crazy for putting so much effort into home-made canned **tomato** products when they are really not too expensive to buy, but there is a pride in making things oneself, and if it can lead to laziness in the long run and keep me out of trouble in the short run, it's a win-win, right?

Japanese **Shishito peppers** can be used interchangeably with Padron peppers. They are great charred and used in some sort

This Week

Red Butter OR Red Leaf Lettuce

Mixed Tomatoes*

Butternut Squash

Zucchini*

Shishito Peppers

Rainbow OR Green Chard

Strawberries OR Pippin Apples*

Dill*

Everything is certified organic. Some tomatoes are from Mariquita Farm. Apples are from Fruitilicious Farm. Some zucchini and dill is from Coke Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

of culinary version of Russian Roulette, though these seem to be generally milder.

Swiss Chard has managed to fool the Bagra bugs in order to join the box this week. According to the World's Healthiest Foods website, chard is a good choice if you are diabetic:

"...studies show that syringic acid—one of chard's premiere flavonoids—has the ability to inhibit activity of an enzyme called alpha-glucosidase. Alpha-glucosidase is an enzyme used to break down carbohydrates into simple sugars. When this enzyme gets inhibited, fewer carbs get broken down and blood sugar is able to stay more steady." Nice work, chard!

Your salad bowls will rejoice with the silky sounds of soft **Red Butter lettuce** or the blushing and delicate **Red Leaf lettuce**.

Last but not least, you will receive the fresh herb of **dill** this week! **Dill** goes pretty famously with salmon and other fish, but will also pair well with the tomatoes. Enjoy!

Cooking Notes, by Andrew Cohen

Apples and **winter squash** say “Hello Fall!” to me, just as **zucchini** and **tomatoes** say “Summer!” to me. This is a favorite time for me as far as what is available. **Butternut squash** and **apples** seem a natural pairing to me, so they appear this week as a purée. By the way, if you make your own “baby food”, this is a great combo that kids really like as well as adults. The **butternut** could be sliced into rounds along with **apples** after coring the latter and they could be tiled onto cooked onions for a nice gratin finished with some bread crumbs, Gruyere, and almonds. **Swiss chard** could be added to the onions in the gratin where the earthy flavor of the chard would be a foil to the sweetness of the **squash** and **apple**. The **chard** leaves could be barely cooked and the stems well-cooked with onions to be placed in a bowl which is then filled with a soup of **tomatoes** that are grilled with garlic cloves before being pureed and heated through. The **tomatoes** pair this week with grilled **zucchini** and mint for a salad dressed with a grilled Meyer lemon dressing. This is a mezze style salad, but if you wished, you could add lettuce to it. It would be good as a topping for pita or crostini also. The Spanish inflected Eggs in Hell can easily be played around with variations. Add curry and ginger to the **tomatoes** and add dollops of yogurt or chunks of paneer for an Indian take, or go with basil, a little sturdy red wine, and parmesan or Gruyere for Italy or France. The **tomato** sauce could also take the chard and zucchini for a side dish, or use it to braise lamb shanks. **Shishito peppers** have a flavor similar to padrons, but I have yet to get a spicy one. They are excellent skewered and grilled, and are traditionally served with a little mound of salt in izakayas (Japanese “pubs”). If you have some thin scallions you could skewer them up and grill together, or get a little fish and cut into small strips and place between the peppers. Use a mixture of a sweet miso with a little sake, mirin, and ginger and orange juice as a marinade before grilling for a nice flavor combo. If you take some of the marinade and add a little mayo to it and paint it on the skewers or on fish, then grill or broil, the sauce will take on the richness and texture of a cheese sauce. If you wanted a dessert from the box, use the **butternut** for pumpkin bread or pie. Some 90% of canned pumpkin actually IS **butternut squash**, and I am sure this will taste better than what comes out of the can, especially if you bake it.

Butternut and Apple Purée, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This purée makes a nice accompaniment to greens with earthy flavors or meats such as pork and chicken. Roasting the squash makes for a deeper flavor, and keeps the squash from getting soggy leaving the purée watery and bland. The addition of onion rounds out the flavors.

1 medium-large butternut squash, split lengthwise and seeded	2 medium to large sweet firm apples, peeled and seeded, cut into medium dice
1 small brown onion, finely diced	Neutral flavored oil as needed
2 TBS butter + more as needed, roughly 4-6 TBS	2 sprigs fresh thyme
2 fresh sage leaves	Salt and pepper to taste
¼ TBS apple cider	Water as needed

Heat the oven to 400°F. Oil the squash on the cut surfaces and place on foil on a sheet pan in the center of the oven. Roast for 20-30 minutes, until you can poke the squash and leave a dimple. Carefully turn the squash and cook until the cut surface becomes golden and you can smell the sugars caramelizing, around 15 minutes. When done, remove from the oven and allow to cool enough so you can handle it. Use a large spoon to scoop out the flesh, and discard the skin.

While the squash roasts, heat a medium sauteuse or skillet over medium heat. Film well with oil and when hot, add the onions. Cook until translucent, adding a little water at a time to prevent browning. Continue cooking until the onions are thoroughly cooked through and sweetened.

Add the apples and cook until they take on a golden color. Remove the pan from the heat and keep covered while you wait for the squash to finish.

Once the squash is scooped out of the shells, return the pan to the heat and get hot. Add the apple cider and cook down by 50 percent.

Make room at the edge of the pan by the handle, then add the butter. As soon as it starts to melt, add the herbs. Cook so the butter browns a little and the herbs become fragrant. Remove the herbs and swirl the butter to coat the floor of the pan. Add the squash and stir to coat with the browned herb butter and combine with the apples and onions. Cook until all the ingredients are quite hot, season with salt and pepper and then transfer pan contents to a food processor.

Purée the lot, adding a little water if the squash is shy about starting up. Once the purée starts to move, add a couple tablespoons of butter and taste after 20 seconds. Repeat until the purée is buttery/fluffy enough. Add more salt and pepper as needed. Serve hot. Serves: 4

Chef's Notes: If you want, you can cook a peeled waxy potato diced into the onions. When you purée the mass, the potato with its starches will absorb more liquid and butter and will yield a firmer purée with a little more body to it. If you wish to dress this purée up for a nice dinner, or simply add more depth to the finished product, add a few drops of Italian Apple Balsamic vinegar around the purée and drag the form through on the way to the mouth. This (sort of expensive) thick condiment is wonderful as a secret weapon in the kitchen, and goes so well with autumnal foods.

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