



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 32, October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## Rain, by Stephen Pedersen

Here atop our coastal terrace where our home ranch is located, there is very little between us and the coast to slow storm systems down as they come off the Pacific Ocean. For most of the day last Sunday it felt as if our house was in an enormous car wash—being buffeted by near-40mph gusts and driving rain. As of Monday morning we had received around an inch and a half—a lot for a mid-October storm, but far less than the six inches my cousin Josh measured at their farm in nearby Corralitos where the moisture is compressed against the Santa Cruz mountains. Such gradients are not uncommon—on average we receive nearly half the rainfall as they do. And the further up the mountains you go, the more extreme the difference is. In Ben Lomond, for instance, over 9 inches of rain fell between last Friday and Sunday! That is nearly half of the rainfall we receive here in an entire season.

Since farming is such a weather dependent occupation, people often ask me where I turn for information; the answer is that I mostly use the National Weather Service's website. They have the usual weekly forecast summary, using icons to show which days will see sunshine and which will be cloudy, just like most other sites do. But I go straight for the discussion section—where the good stuff is. This is where the forecasters have to explain how exactly they came up with the general forecast they did and it is full of much more nuanced and specific information. Forecasters these days blend information from several different computer models, some of which perform reliably better than others. Over the years I've learned that the "Euro" (European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting) has the best track record of all.

Another great feature on the website for weather nerds like myself is the hourly rainfall page where you can see the hourly totals for all of the automated rain gauges in the State. It gives you a fascinating snapshot of just how large some winter storms are and it dramatically shows the differences between wet mountaintop spots and those in nearby rain-shadows.

By the way, the "Euro" is calling for rain again early next week, so batten down the hatches!

## Veggie Notes, by Molly Jacobsen

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

Everyone will get a hard winter squash this week, either of the **blue hubbard** or **green kabocha** variety. Both kinds are delicious roasted and pureed into soups, or used as pie fillings or as a base for a sweet bread. I don't know about you, but the rain we got over the weekend put me in the mood for rich and nutritious comfort foods, and these winter squash really fit the bill.

Another one of my favorites is coming your way this week—**romanesco**. This not-quite-broccoli-but-not-quite-cauliflower brassica is edible evidence of the intersection of nature and math: fractals! The infinite complexity you can see in the growth pattern of the romanesco florets can be mathematically described by relatively simple equations. It's awesome! And beautiful! And who doesn't enjoy a healthy, delicious meal that is at once beautiful and awe-inspiring?

If you get **cranberry shelling beans** don't be intimidated by them! Just pop them out of the pods and cook them up. Make a fresh bean salad, serve them as a side or main dish, or add them to a soup.

Running out of **summer squash** recipes? Try something crazy, like giving desserts a nutritional boost by using your **summer squash** to make super-moist summer squash chocolate cake! Have a food dehydrator? Make a batch of **summer squash** chips.

The rain has set back the **strawberries** a bit, so you may get some nice fall **Pippin apples** from Matulich Farm instead. Apple pie time?

I lovingly refer to **Lacinato kale** as "dinosaur kale" for its entirely Jurassic appearance, one of my favorites for simple kale salads. Give it a good massage first, to break up some of that fibrous structure.

**Black Spanish radishes** may be new to some of you too. Peel off the firm black skin to get to the snowy white tasty radish flesh, substantial enough to use in a soup. Sliced **radishes** can also make a salad of their own, with a simple dressing of rice vinegar, ginger, and soy sauce.

Rounding out the boxes are **red oak lettuce** and either **cherry tomatoes** (that sounds like a salad to me, with a balsamic vinaigrette) or **padron peppers**. If this is your first experience with **Padron peppers**, try cooking them whole in oil in a hot pan with some garlic until they soften and the sides blister. Sprinkle with coarse salt and pop them in your mouth. Just have a drink handy--most are mild, but some of them are spicy! Enjoy your veggies!

### IN THE BOX

**Strawberries OR  
Pippin Apples\***

**Padron Peppers OR  
Tomatoes**

**Red Oak Leaf Lettuce**

**Romanesco OR  
Cranberry Shelling  
Beans**

**Lacinato Kale**

**Bunched Red  
Radishes OR Loose  
Black Spanish  
Radishes**

**Mixed Summer  
Squash**

**Blue Hubbard OR  
Green Kabocha  
Winter Squash**

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

## Chef's Notes, by Andrew E Cohen

I love the very idea of winter squash, not just the flavor. Seeing them at markets and farm stands makes me look round for some Dr. Seuss character. I find the colors and shapes wonderful and often humorous, and frequently see parents of young children playing with the kids and the squash. For some reason, though, it often seems adults take them so seriously. Perhaps they are intimidated by the thought of cooking them? Check the instructions on the website for cutting the squash to make it easier, then have fun.

**Winter squash seeds** can be eaten as well. Scoop them out and rinse with some coarse salt in a colander to clean them, then toss with a little oil, salt and pepper and garlic if you wish and roast around 20 minutes at 300°F. Cool a little and crunch away. Great for parties, cocktails, or snacks. The flesh of winter squash can become pie, "croutons", soup, preserves or "butters", side dishes, or used in lieu of potatoes. I have used leftover cubes in breakfast burritos with good bacon and eggs for a killer breakfast. Don't be intimidated by winter squash. Instead, think of it as a new best friend you have just met and go in the kitchen and play together.

Another fun vegetable is the romanesco. Is it broccoli? Cauliflower? Yes to both I suppose. It will do whatever those do, and more as well. The core is perfect for quickling, and the florets take well to any means of cooking. Also, I find romanesco doesn't turn to mush as suddenly or quickly as broccoli or cauliflower, which makes it more forgiving. Roast it whole, sauté the florets, quickle it, or shave it into thin slices for sautéing or making into a tart, it is ready to roll.

## Sauté of Lacinato Ribbons and Winter Squash

**Cubes**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

With the orange squash and almost black ribbons of lacinato, this dish is great for Halloween parties. It is great as a side dish with poultry, pork, and sausage, or add grains and mushrooms to it for a hearty vegetarian main course.

1 bunch lacinato kale, stemmed and cut lengthwise into long ¼ inch wide ribbons, washed well, drained but not entirely	4 heaping cups winter squash, such as Blue Hubbard or green Hokkaido*, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
1 small onion, cut into fine dice	3 cloves garlic, minced
½ teaspoon cinnamon	1 inch tender rosemary tip
Salt and pepper to taste	Olive oil as needed

Heat a large non-stick or well-seasoned sauté pan over medium-high heat. While the pan heats, drizzle the squash with oil and toss to coat evenly. From a height, scatter half the cinnamon over the squash, season with salt and pepper and toss to spread seasoning and cinnamon over the squash cubes.

When the pan is hot, film well with oil, and wait for the oil to get very hot. Add the rosemary tip and cook, turning to prevent burning, until it is crisp and the oil is seasoned with rosemary flavor. Drain and discard the rosemary, then carefully add the squash cubes. If the pot isn't big enough to hold the squash without it piling up or tight crowding, work in batches. Cook the squash so it crisps along the edges and turns a golden brown. By the time the squash turns golden it should be tender all the way through. If not, put it in a 325°F hot oven

on an oiled sheet pan to finish cooking through. Should only take 6-8 minutes.

When the squash is cooked, make a well in the center of the pan and film with oil if needed. Add the onions and garlic, drizzle with a little oil and season with salt and pepper and gently sauté until the alliums turn translucent and are aromatic without browning them at all. Stir into the squash cubes.

Add the slightly damp ribbons of kale and toss to mix into the other vegetables. Dust with the remaining cinnamon. Sauté to wilt. The moisture on the leaves and oil in the pan should be enough, but if it is needed, drizzle the kale with water, then gently fold the leaves under the squash. Put a top on the pan for 3-5 minutes, just long enough to encourage the kale to wilt. When the kale is cooked through and the squash is done, toss gently to ensure everything is well combined and serve hot.

*Chef's Notes:* \* For Japanese kabocha types, use a sturdy peeler to take off most, but not all, of the skin. Thin skinned kabochas have edible skins and they look good when not thoroughly peeled. Also, if it is easier for you, cube the squash and oil it, then roast in the oven until it is cooked through and golden all over. Try 400°F for 20-25 minutes, then continue with the recipe, but add the squash to the pan after you have gently cooked the alliums. Serves: 4

## Orange Romanesco with Crispy Capers and Pine Nuts

from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 head romanesco, florets only, cut into ¾ inch long pieces, each floret halved lengthwise	½ small onion, red preferred, cut into fine dice
1 small garlic clove, minced	3 TBS capers (salted or brined), well rinsed and patted dry
1 tsp. fresh oregano leaves, finely chopped	A flavorful olive oil, as needed
Salt and pepper to taste	¼ cup (or as needed) orange juice, preferably fresh squeezed
1 heaping ¼ cup pine nuts, toasted	

Heat a pan big enough to hold the romanesco one layer, more or less. When pan is hot, film quite generously with olive oil, and get it almost smoking hot. Add the capers and fry them until they expand and crisp. (Remember they will finish crisping as they dry.) Use a slotted spoon or mesh skimmer to remove the capers to paper towels and be sure to blot them carefully, then put on another paper towel if needed so they dry.

Lower heat to medium and add the cauliflower. Toss to coat with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Cook until the florets are picking up some golden color and crisping a little. Add the orange juice and put a lid on the pan and steam 2-4 minutes. Remove top and taste a piece. If the florets are getting tender sauté 1 minute to dry a little, then make a well, add a touch of oil, then the garlic, and stir until aromatic.

Make a well, ensure there is some oil in it, and add the onions. Cook until softened but not colored. Toss everything to combine in the pan, and scatter with the herbs. Stir in over heat so the herbs are fragrant. Scatter the dish with the capers and pine nuts, toss to combine and heat through, and serve.

Serves: 4