



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

November 2nd and 3rd 2011

How Are We Doing? from Steve and Jeanne

There are just three more weeks of regular season CSA deliveries and the year seems to have gone by in a blur. This has been a busy year for us, and one with a lot of new projects and challenges. The two biggest changes we had this year were operating as a single farm CSA after 8 years in our Two Small Farms partnership, and getting our new Lewis Road farm up and running. This meant many extra hours of planning and work, but also lots of excitement over new possibilities. We have done our best this year to make the CSA what we want it to be—a good variety of very high quality organic vegetables and fruits, grown by the most environmentally sustainable methods possible, delivered fresh, without hitches, to our pick-up sites every week.

Now is a good time for evaluation of what we're doing. We feel that for the most part we have been doing well on the quality of produce—this has been a good growing year for us for chards, kales, collards, wax beans, shelling beans, lettuces, beets, turnips, cauliflower, broccoli, romanesco, fava beans, apples, radishes, carrots (after we figured out the nematode problem!), celery, fennel, cabbage, mei quin choy, parsley, cilantro, leeks, padron peppers, potatoes, summer squashes, and winter squashes. On the other hand, we had a difficult time this past spring in filling the boxes at all, with the unseasonably cool temperatures, lack of sunshine, and the inevitable learning curve associated with growing on new land.

We also know that we need to do better on some of the summer vegetables. With the intense time pressures of the early season, we weren't able to get our hoophouses up on the Lewis Road terraces on time to plant tomatoes, so we depended on other local organic growers for the tomatoes. Due to the cool summer, it was a poor year for tomatoes all around, and though we got some nice tomatoes for you, we did not have the quantities and variety that we would have liked to provide. In addition our eggplants and cucumbers that we planted at the Lewis Rd. site did not produce well, partly also due to the coolness of the summer. Next year we will be planting tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and cucumbers under the hoophouses, and we are excited about having these vegetables more represented in the summer boxes, and hopefully having extras for your canning needs too. The hoophouses will also allow us to get the edge on the spring harvest, and to continue some crops through the winter.

This was an exciting but also frustrating year for our young orchards as well. The apples have started to produce nicely this year, and we were very excited to have our first blueberry harvest. But the blueberries caused some frustration also because the quantities we were able to pick each week made

rotating them through the pick-up sites difficult. Without enough to at least fill all the boxes in one truck, we just didn't manage to distribute them evenly, so we know that some of you got them a few times and others only once or maybe not at all. Fortunately that problem should be alleviated next spring as the plants are thriving and will produce a lot more fruit as they mature. Speaking of berries, we feel that the strawberries worked out OK this year, in spite of having less acreage of mostly second-year berries to pick. For the most part the fruit was good and we had enough for everybody for most of the season, though we would have liked to have continued to put the berries in the boxes a little later into the fall. For next year we are planting a full 2 1/2 acres of new crop strawberries and

will plant Seascapes as well as Albions again (this year we had almost all Albions). We like the Albions a lot, but we also like the Seascapes (and they make a particularly good jam), and it is nice to have both varieties, plus enough to have more U-picks or flats available to order along with your boxes.

The pears were a more frustrating proposition. We were looking forward to our first harvest and were delighted when we saw the trees loaded with flowers in the spring. But in the end we got very little fruit (some may trickle into the boxes as "mystery" items these next couple weeks, but we won't have enough for everybody.) We aren't sure whether the problem was due to the strong late spring storms we got or difficulties with pollination. Hopefully we will figure it out in time for a good crop next year! We are continuing to plant fruit trees, including our new avocado orchard at Lewis Road, though this will not produce for a few years

yet. Overall, we are enthusiastic about increasing the amount of fruit we can put in the shares in the coming year(s).

So, this is our self-evaluation. But we are interested in knowing what you think about our CSA from the receiving end. What vegetables would you like to get more of? What would you like to see less of? Which vegetables were about right? How did we do on the administration and delivery? Were there things that frustrated you? What can we do better?

In the next week or so, we will be sending out an e-mail survey. When you get it, please take a moment to let us know your opinions about our CSA program to help us plan for the coming year. Thanks!

This Week

Apples*

Gold or Green Swiss Chard

Little Gem and/or Green Butter
lettuce

Cilantro

Bunched Leeks

Romanesco, Cauliflower, OR
Purple Cauliflower

Red Cabbage

Shelling Beans OR Summer
Squash

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Some apples are from Billy Peixoto. All other veggies and fruits were grown by High Ground Organics. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.

Sign Up Now for the Winter CSA

The winter CSA will run every other week from November 30/December 1 to February 22/23. To sign up, please send a check for \$160 to High Ground Organics at the address along the bottom. Include the winter pick-up site you wish to use (see list at <http://www.highgroundorganics.com/csa-program/pick-up-locations/>) Please sign up now so we can plan our crops accordingly. Thank you!

Notes from Chef Andrew

Many of these ingredients put me in an Italian mood. I think a stew of **chard** and **shelling beans** would be nice against the cooling nights we are having now. Stew up the **leeks** and diced **chard** stems, and then add the chopped leaves. Cook the shellies separately (preferably the day before) and add them into the stew with a little of their cooking liquid, a bunch of minced garlic and some red wine for a full flavored stew. Serve with crusty bread or some kasha. Another way to fight off cold weather would be to make a soup with roasted **cauliflower** or **Romanesco**. Quick and simple, the flavor belies the ease with which this dish comes together. This soup is very versatile as to how it can be flavored and goes with many types of cuisines. (See recipe on our website.) Serve it with a salad made with the sturdy **Little Gem lettuces**. Another dish I like this time of year is braised **cabbage** and **apples**. I do it as a side or add potatoes and sausage for a one dish meal. You could also do a salad with the **red cabbage** and **apples**, and give it heat by making a dressing with the **Cilantro Chili Juice**. You could also use several of the ingredients in the box at once, making a stuffed roasted winter squash and filling it with chard, leeks, summer squash, and beans. If I am in a hurry, I might just grind up the **leeks** and then the **cauliflower** in the food processor and sauté them into a sauce for pasta. Start by sautéing the leeks with garlic until soft, and then turn up the heat and add some oil. Sauté the ground cauliflower over high heat to caramelize it, and then add a shot of white wine and reduce it. Add a cup of stock and start to reduce it. While this is going on, cook pasta, and drain, reserving a cup of pasta cooking water. Add some herbs and tomato paste to the cauliflower, then the pasta water. Cook down to thicken the sauce, and then add the pasta, tossing to combine. Serve with chili flakes and cheese on the side.

Cilantro Chili Sauté Juice, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Stems from 1 bunch cilantro*	1-3 chilies-jalapenos or serranos, stemmed and chopped
1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and de-germed	2 juicy medium sized limes
-OR-	1/3rd cup rice vinegar
Water if needed	-Optional-
½ bunch of green onions, chopped or	½ small onion, peeled and chopped

Add all the ingredients except water to a blender. Start slowly to get everything moving, working your way up to high. If it seems as if nothing is moving, add a couple TBS of water. Once it starts moving, crank the blender to high and liquefy the contents. Store in the refrigerator and use as needed.

Chef's Notes and Tips: Use a splash as a condiment for vegetables, eggs, or noodles, or use it when sautéing/stir-

frying for flavor and to lubricate the pan. Incorporate into vinaigrette-e.g. 1 TBS cilantro pepper juice, 1 TBS rice vinegar or lime juice, and 6 TBS oil for a spicy dressing for cabbage or noodles. Stir fry shrimp and vegetables using some of this and coconut milk for a quick Thai inflected dish.

Braised Red Cabbage with Apples, from Chef

Andrew E Cohen

2 medium leeks, split and cut into ¼ inch slices	1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 3/8 inch thick rounds
½ head red cabbage, sliced or cut into 2 inch squares	1 C of wine such as gewürztraminer or riesling, or a red wine such as zinfandel
1-2 TBS sugar or honey if needed if you use red wine	Water or light stock as needed
2-3 firm apples such as Braeburn or Granny Smith, cut into wedges around ½ inch at the base	A small sprig of rosemary OR sage
Salt and fresh ground pepper	Neutral oil such as grapeseed as needed
4-6 small potatoes such as Romanze or Desiree, quartered (Optional)	2-4 Sausages such as Corralitos German or Bavarian, either sliced in rounds or in half (Optional)

Heat oven to 400°F. In a 3 qt. sauté or chefs pan, or casserole, cook the leeks and the carrots to caramelize them (brown them gently until colored and sweet.) Add the cabbage, season with salt and pepper, then turn using tongs to coat with the oil in the pan and mix the ingredients. Cook to add color to the cabbage and begin the wilting process. Once the cabbage has taken on some color and is wilting, add the wine and bring to a boil. If the wine does not come halfway up the ingredients, add some water or stock to raise the level. Scatter the apples over that, then tear up the herbs and sprinkle those on. Put a tight fitting lid on the pan and transfer to the oven. Bake until the cabbage is done, around 30 minutes. Check periodically to ensure the pan doesn't dry out. If it seems dry, add liquid. When the cabbage is tender, the dish is done. If there is a lot of liquid left over, you could pour it off or remove the lid from the pan and cook to evaporate the liquid, which will concentrate the flavors.

If you decide to make the dish a one pot meal, put the potatoes in the pan after adding the cabbage and then proceed. Around 10-15 minutes prior to the dish being finished, add the sausages, trying to gently get them into the cabbage. This bastes the sausages and imparts the smokiness of the sausage to the braise. Serve with mustard and the rest of the wine.

Chefs Notes and Tips: You can do this dish entirely on the stove-top, just be careful not to burn the bottom ingredients and cook slowly. The dish will probably take a little longer (10-15 minutes) on the stove top. If using the potatoes, make sure they are not too large- 1½ to 2 inch pieces would be ideal. You could dice the apples into 1 inch pieces instead of wedging them.

Upcoming Events

Wreathmaking at the Thomas Farm: November 19, November 20, December 3rd, and December 4th. Price is \$30 for individuals or \$25 for groups of 6 or more. Call Jean Thomas at (831) 724-4013 to sign up.