



# High Ground Organics

## Community Supported Agriculture

Week 34, November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

### Bats! by Molly Jacobsen

October is Bat Appreciation Month, and with the celebration of Halloween this week I thought I'd take a moment to share with you some of the awesome things I learned about bats while earning my degree at UCSC. For my senior thesis I worked in collaboration with a PhD student to examine the effects of agricultural intensification on bat species communities, and wanted to share with you some reasons why bats are so important in agroecosystems and how the farmers here at High Ground are doing their part to support these important creatures.

Bats eat pests! There are many common Halloween images of bats as spooky blood-sucking vampires, but in reality the bats that live here on California's central coast mostly eat insects. A large proportion of the insects that bats eat are in the families of moths, grasshoppers, and beetles, many of which are big-time crop pests. A single bat can eat up to its weight in insect prey in a single night of foraging, which makes these little guys incredibly important for insect pest control on organic farms like ours. In fact, studies have shown that bats may be even more important than birds for controlling insect pests.

Did you know that we have thirteen different species of bats in our area? Different species have adapted in different ways to be able to exploit the natural variation in the landscapes of the central coast. There are open-area bat species that are bigger in size and have long wings that make them fast flyers that can go long distances over open fields. These bats use low, long echolocation calls to be able to "see" long distances. Conversely, there are forest-dwelling bat species that are smaller in size and have short, stubby wings. These short wings allow forest bats to fly more slowly and give them more maneuverability, so they can fly in habitats that are cluttered with trees and other vegetation. Forest bats use short, high-pitched echolocation calls which make it so they can "see" really well close up and fly super close to vegetation in cluttered habitats. However, these high-pitched calls don't travel very far across open fields, so forest bats have to stick near the trees to be able to "see." Open-area and forest-dwelling bats eat different kinds of insects, so it's important to have a balanced community of both types of bat species in order to have the most protection against insect pest outbreaks.

Large-scale industrial agriculture is really harmful to bats. Many of the native plants that grew in central California have

been removed to make room for industrial agriculture, and the crops that are planted in their place have very little diversity. These big open fields are virtually impossible for many of the forest-dwelling bat species to cross, and the populations of forest bats are suffering because of this major habitat transformation. Even the open-area bats which can exploit these huge fields are suffering because of the land management practices used by industrial agriculture. The use of agricultural chemicals like pesticides and synthetic

fertilizers leaves a lot of chemical residue in nearby bodies of water, which can make bats sick. When bats eat insects that have been sprayed by pesticides, the pesticides collect in their bodies and poison the bats and their young.

At High Ground, we are dedicated to farming with the natural ecosystem, not against it. Growing a diverse array of vegetables not only keeps our CSA members happy, it makes the bats happy, too! In addition to the vegetable crops that are rotated throughout our fields, our farm has hedgerows made up of large, perennial plants that provide year-round habitat for bats and other animals. The hedgerows help forest-dwelling bats navigate through our fields, and protect all kinds of bats from wind, rain, and overhead predators like owls. We don't use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, and instead rely on working with nature's natural balance to keep pest populations under control. By farming organically and providing non-crop perennial vegetation on our farm, we are supporting a balanced and diverse community of bat species. They might be hard to spot, but the bats on our farm are an important part of our farm ecosystem. So, here's to bats, appreciated at High Ground during October as well as the rest of the year.

### IN THE BOX

Broccoli

Green Butter Lettuce

Mixed Summer Squash

Delicata Squash

Chantenay Carrots

Green Chard OR Collard  
Greens

Italian Parsley

Tomatoes

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

### Veggie Notes, by Molly Jacobsen

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

All this rainy weather has me craving rich and hearty soups and stews (am I repeating myself?). This week I'm going to break out a recipe from *My New Roots*, which is a healthy, flavorful remake of the classic Cream of **Broccoli** Soup. With cashews for richness and nutritional yeast for cheesiness, this is a dairy-free alternative that is SOUPer flavorful and pack full of the nutrients we need to stay healthy all winter. Not into soup? Separate your **broccoli** into florets and steam until just fork-tender. Salt and pepper to taste, plus a healthy dose of butter and a good squeeze of lemon and boring old

**broccoli** is suddenly totally tasty. Plus, adding butter to your vegetables makes it easier for your body to absorb nutrients, since many are fat-soluble.

**Delicata Winter Squash** are pretty little squashes, with sweet nutty flesh and a thin, edible skin. I like to slice the whole squash into rings, scoop the seeds out from each ring and then toss them with a mixture of melted coconut oil (or bacon fat if you want to get really crazy) and maple syrup. Dust them with salt and a little cayenne pepper, lay them flat on a baking sheet, and put them in the oven for 20 minutes at 425. Don't forget to flip them at the half way point, so both sides of each ring is browned and caramelized. Prepared this way, they're like candy!

**Italian Parsley** makes a nice pesto. Remove the thicker stems and put the leaves into a blender with 1/2 to 1 cup of walnuts, 1/2 cup of parmesan cheese, 3 cloves of garlic and 1/2 tsp of salt, and let her rip! Drizzle in enough olive oil to bring the mixture to the consistency that you like, and squeeze in half a lemon. You can use this pesto as you would any basil pesto- as a dressing for pasta with sautéed **summer squash**, or as a substitute for red sauce on pizza. Roast up those **chantenay carrots** for 20 minutes at 425 and smother them in this pesto.

The rain has put a kabosh on the strawberries, but we have a few **tomatoes** still coming into our hoop houses at our Lewis Road ranch, so you'll get a small portion of tomatoes to stretch the season a little! Enjoy your veggies!

## Chef's Notes, by Andrew Cohen

**Broccoli** is ubiquitous, and often taken for granted, but when it is really fresh as in the CSA box, the flavor is great. Although it keeps for a few days in the colder parts of the refrigerator, try to use it as soon as possible. Just remember, like all brassicas, cooking it with a minimum of water involved yields better results. The **Carrot Persillade** can top roasted fish like halibut, ling cod, or sturgeon, shrimp, chicken, or rabbit.

Another great use for **carrots** is to mix the carrots (roasted or blanched and sautéed) with roasted chopped hazelnuts, sautéed onion, and plumped currants. Try making a hash of **carrots, broccoli**, barley or farro and then roasting the halved **delicata squash** top down until tender, and then flipping, filling, and adding a little goat cheese and some nuts to finish. If you have some left-over lentils to add to the mix, you have a complete protein dish all in one sweet package. Cutting **delicata** lengthwise then into half rings and roasting or sautéing is a great way to add them to pastas or to sturdy salads. Try these with a salad including diced apples or torn dates, pepitas, **lettuce** or kale, shredded **carrot**, and a dressing with some pomegranate syrup in it along with Moroccan spices such as turmeric, cinnamon, ginger, etc. You could also use the **squash** whipped with some spices on a cheese plate with some rye toasts in lieu of dessert.

## Carrot Persillade, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 cup flat leaf parsley, mostly leaves	2 cloves garlic, minced finely/pulverized, but not smashed-use a very sharp knife with the sides wetted with water
1 1/2 cups bread crumbs,	Olive oil as needed

preferably home made	
Salt and Pepper to taste	1/2 tsp. fresh thyme, minced
1 cup (2-3 carrots) ground/finely chopped carrots	<i>Optional:</i> 1/4 cup heaping shelled salted pistachios, chopped as finely as the carrots (do not use a food processor)

Use the big hole of a box grater and not-your-sharpest knife to create a finely chopped meal a little coarser than the bread crumbs, or pulse carrots in a food processor to get the same size. Be sure to pulse and scrape down, pulse and scrape down repeatedly to get these results. Scraping down is important. When you have gotten to the right size remove all but a couple tablespoons and chop/process to a fine wet mess, and then add to the rest of the carrots, being sure to scrape in any available liquid. Season with a little salt. Stir around, then reserve.

Using a very sharp knife, chop the parsley very finely and mix with the garlic.

Heat a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Put the crumbs into a bowl and add a very small amount of olive oil. Use your fingers to toss the crumbs thoroughly. Add just enough oil so the crumbs are moist, but not wet. Add salt and pepper, and the thyme, to the crumbs and add to the hot pan. Stirring all the while, cook the crumbs until they are golden and smell toasty. Get a good golden brown color on them, and as soon as they are colored, empty the pan into a large bowl and toss and stir until cooled.

When cooled, add the persillade (parsley garlic mixture) and stir well to combine. Add in the carrots, stirring well. If using, add the pistachios. If the mixture seems dry, add a little olive oil until the mixture is moist like a damp sand, but not wet. Taste for seasoning. If salt is required, do not add until just before using the persillade or the parsley will blacken and the carrots may weep and the all crunch will be wiped out.

Store in a covered container until ready to use, or freeze. Yield: Around 2 cups

## Roast Broccoli with Carrot Persillade, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch broccoli (4-5 cups cut up), cut into large florets, stems peeled and cut into chunks a little smaller than the florets	2 ounces orange juice
2-4 TBS light flavored olive oil, or grapeseed or avocado oil, as needed	Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup, or to taste, Carrot Persillade (see recipe above)	

Toss broccoli with orange juice and a little salt, toss to coat and allow to marinate 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 375°F. While oven comes up to temperature, drizzle with oil and toss to coat well. Season with salt and pepper to taste, remembering you salted it a little earlier. Toss to coat evenly and place on sturdy sheet pan, lined with foil or parchment, or not. When transferring to the sheet pan, allow any excess juice or oil to remain in the bowl. Place the sheet pan in the center of the oven and bake for around 15-20 minutes. At this point the broccoli should be a little crisp on the outside of the florets and the thicker parts should be a little chewy. If not, cook a little longer to brown the broccoli and get it chewy (sort of a de-hydration). When cooked through, crispy and chewy, without a lot of the swamp stink, scatter the broccoli with the Carrot Persillade, and serve.

Serves: 4