



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Farm Tour and Production Update,

by Jeanne Byrne

We enjoyed seeing several of you at our Lewis Road farm tour on Saturday. The weather cleared up nicely for us just as we got started. It's good to get out of our routine and meet some of the interesting people who get our CSA shares! We started off on the west side of the property with a look at the terraces Steve put in. Steve talked about his plans for portable hoop houses to use on the terraces--he plans to have half of the terraces in hoop houses and the other half in cover crops at any given time. The hoop houses are basically like putting a greenhouse right over the farm field; you plant right into the ground and can use the tractor inside too.

To prevent erosion problems due to runoff from the hoop houses, he is designing a rainwater catchment system to collect the water from gutters along the hoop house "roofs". He'll then use a solar pump to pump the water back up the hill and use it to water inside the hoop houses. The hoop houses will help our early spring crops grow faster--something we wish we had right now! They also will allow us to grow more vegetables through the winter. It's an exciting project that has the wheels of Steve's mechanical mind whirring.

Next we visited the middle field, which has many of our spring crops planted in it. We scooted past the bee hives that our local natural beekeeper Keith Kimes is housing on our farm. The bees are beneficial to those crops that need pollination, like the summer squash that is getting ready to flower in the next field over. On the second oak knoll, Steve had laid out his farm equipment in order of use and gave us a step by step narrative of the process of preparing the soil and planting seeds. He showed us a field where the cover crop had been mowed and tilled under, but not yet raised into beds. Next we walked by some beds where broccoli transplants had just been planted. We have mature hedgerows on our home farm that provide a lot of habitat for beneficial insects. At Lewis Road, Steve is experimenting with planting beneficial insect habitat right in the rows with the broccoli. Broccoli is the crop that tends to be the hardest hit by aphids. Every fourth bed, he is planting sweet alyssum starts alternated with the broccoli starts down one row. He hopes the alyssum will creep over into the space between the rows and provide abundant habitat for syrphid flies, the larval form of which feed on aphids.

With the real spring weather we're now having, the crops are finally starting to grow faster, but many items are still just on the cusp of readiness. The strawberries are bouncing back from the heavy rains, and barring another heavy storm should be coming in a couple weeks. The blueberries are looking nice and heading for a May arrival in your boxes. Our first planting of fava beans has finally set pods, but they're small yet so it'll still be a little while for those. The summer squash is bounding along and almost ready to flower, so we'll likely begin to pick zucchinis and summer

squashes in about three weeks. Many types of greens are almost ready to pick, including chards, collards, kale, more braising mix, spinach, as well as lettuces, scallions, Italian parsley, bok choy, radishes, cippolini onions, and gold and red beets. The cold, wet weather and the lack of sunlight made March a very slow growing month, but this April sun is working wonders. We have been relying on our friends at other local organic farms to help us to fill out your boxes these past couple weeks, and have been fortunate to find some really nice produce for you. But we are looking forward to our own crops coming fully into production. With our hoop houses planned for next year, we expect to be able to hit the March harvest window right on target next year. Thanks for bearing with us!

## This Week

**Tokyo Turnips**

**Salad Mix**

**Mei Quin Choy**

**Broccoli shoots\***

**Scallions\***

**Black Spanish  
Radishes\***

**Spring Onions\***

**Flowers: Ranunculus**

## Veggie Notes/Storage Tips

Everything goes into the fridge as soon as you get home. *Tokyo turnips* are thin skinned white turnips--you don't need to peel these! *Spring onions* are onions that have bulbed up but are not left to dry. You can use both the bulb and the greens attached. The salad mix includes 4 types of lettuces. We grow them side by side in the field and harvest them all together as a mix. The salad mix is then triple washed and spun dry. Broccoli shoots are smaller side shoots from the broccoli plants--the main central shoot is what is usually harvested for broccoli, but the smaller side shoots are nice and tender. Black Spanish radishes are not pretty on the outside, but are white and delicious inside.

## Notes and Recipes from Chef Andrew

I like *turnips*, and so do my kids, with Tokyo turnips being the favorite. I like to caramelize these turnips, but roasting is fine too. They can even be used raw shaved onto a salad. Speaking of *salad*, I have included some thoughts on vinaigrettes. Vinaigrette is not just for salad. It is great on cooked vegetables such as the *broccoli shoots* that are in the box. Just blanch the shoots in lots of salted boiling water, cooking just until they change color, then drain and rinse a little in cold water and toss with a dressing. Serve hot or cold. I like the idea of Japanese style sesame vinaigrette for the broccoli shoots. If it is hot, I will serve them with cold soba noodles, maybe some pressed tofu, and a good scattering of sesame seeds or slivered scallions.

*Mei qing choy*, sold as baby bok choy in some places, can be stir-fried, sautéed, steamed, or braised. I have even grilled it. Think along the lines of cutting it into slivers and stir-frying with ginger, garlic, a little soy, and shao-xing (use sherry instead). Pair with shiitake mushrooms and slivers of carrot for color and flavor.

Use *spring onions* as you would regular onions, but don't forget to use the tops as well. These onions will be a little milder, but they are sweet as well. These are great to grill too. Don't peel the onion, and char the outside on a grill. When

good and charred, wrap in newspaper and allow to steam a little. Then peel and dip in Romesco sauce. While we are on the Iberian peninsula, we also have *Black Spanish radishes*. Don't think of these as you would the usual red ones. These are much larger, and very dense. They sometimes have a hotness that reminds me of horseradish, so taste them before using. I have made a salad where I grated one of these, and then tossed it into a dressing of seasoned sour cream. I also have sliced them paper thin and then salted to mellow them out and dressed them with the sour cream dressing. You could try using yogurt instead of sour cream, and maybe use a red wine vinaigrette as the base for the dressing. Or try a chunky vegetable stew with turnips and lots of carrots and onions.

**Vinaigrettes: Salad dressings and cold sauces**

Vinaigrettes can be used as a sauce, especially for fish and poultry, on sandwiches, as a marinade, or even as a pasta sauce. Vinaigrettes are great poured over roasted vegetables such as potatoes, parsnips, and beets, while still warm so the flavors are absorbed. This makes an excellent salad, and is, in fact, how German potato salad is made.

Vinaigrettes are an emulsion of oil and a liquid, typically an acid. One or both elements may be seasoned to contrast or complement with one another or the item the dressing is intended for. The acid is usually vinegar, but can also be things like fruit juices, wine, or water mixed with the above to soften the flavors. The hardest thing about making vinaigrette is the proper emulsification of the two elements so they stay bound together. Just remember to add your oil slowly and whisk hard. Using a blender or a small electric “wand” type mixer is a definite help. You can also use a jar as long as you are careful to find one with a tight fitting lid and are careful to hold on tightly. If you like to make larger amounts of dressing, SaladSuccess makes a handy shaker/squeeze bottle that is marked with the right ratios right on the bottle.

If you wish to make a thicker or creamier dressing, but don't want to add too many calories or cholesterol, you can make the dressing without all the oil, and then whisk in mayonnaise at the end to thicken the dressing. You can also use whipped cream or some yogurt to thicken and add creaminess. Using rice vinegar and a little sugar, and then adding peanut butter takes you in an Asian direction. Use more peanut butter for a sauce consistency that makes a good dip for vegetables. Less peanut butter and you have a great dressing for things like napa cabbage or quickly stir-fried mei quin choy.

**Basic Vinaigrette**, from Chef Andrew Cohen

3:1 ratio of oil to vinegar	Herbs for seasoning
Garlic or shallots if you like	Salt and Pepper
Additions-these are anything from honey or sugar, to mustard	

In a large non-reactive bowl (steel or glass), season vinegar with herbs, salt, pepper, garlic, mustard, miso, whatever, and allow to macerate five minutes or more.

Pour the oil into the bowl in a slow steady stream, whisking all the while. This is emulsification at work. Put your work bowl in a towel that has been twisted into a ring or nest shape. This will hold the bowl steady while you whisk and pour. The dressing is done when you have the right flavor and consistency, and this will depend on your own taste. Ideally, the vinaigrette will be fairly thick, and the flavor will be

balanced. It should not be very sharp, nor should the oil overwhelm the vinegar. *Chef's Tips:* Use lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit juices for the acid. Mix juice and vinegar. If your vinegar is very strong you can cut it with water or herb tea. Using mustard, miso, or yogurt will add flavor and yield a thicker, creamier consistency.

**Light Japanese Style Dressings**, from Chef Andrew Cohen

Amazu is the dressing you get on your basic sunomono, or cucumber salad at Japanese restaurants. The rest are just variations on a theme. When it comes to oil, I keep it very light. Instead of the basic 3:1 ratio of vinaigrette, if I use oil with this dressing I go very lightly. The idea is to use just enough to help the flavors stick to the food. Usually, this is something like a 1:1 ratio.

**Amazu Dressing**

1 cup rice vinegar	1 cup water
5 TBS sugar	

Mix all ingredients like mad until sugar goes into suspension (disappears). Some people heat the liquid and stir in the sugar, others just whisk.

**Sesame “Vinaigrette”**

3 TBS amazu	1 tsp roasted sesame oil
1 dash soy sauce	3-9 TBS neutral flavored oil to thicken, such as grapeseed oil.

Whisk together the amazu, the sesame oil, and the soy sauce. Whisk in the oil in a steady stream until the dressing reaches the consistency you want. This keeps well in the refrigerator. Try adding 3 tablespoons of orange juice instead of the water for a nice change.

**Caramelized Tokyo Turnips**, from Chef Andrew Cohen

1 bunch Tokyo turnips	1 TBS butter or neutral oil
½ tablespoon sugar	Salt and Pepper to taste

Peel the turnips (or not if the skin is tender) and cut into pieces ¾” at the wide end. In a sauté pan just big enough to hold them without crowding, bring enough water to cover the turnips to a boil. Add a large pinch of salt. Add the turnips, lower the heat to a simmer and cook the turnips just until they are no longer raw and have softened just enough so a sharp knife can just poke in. Drain the turnips, discard the water, and return the turnips to the pan. Place the pan back over the heat, bring heat to medium, and sprinkle the sugar evenly over all. Allow the sugar to begin to caramelize. It will start to turn brown, and you will smell it. (If it smells like it might be burning remove from heat immediately). Add the butter, and swirl around, tossing to coat evenly. Reduce heat to low and cook slowly, tossing to allow the turnips to develop crisp surfaces. Taste occasionally to be sure they are not overcooked- they will turn mushy and bitter. Once the turnips are universally colored and glazed, they are ready to serve. Serve as soon as they are done.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Everything is grown by High Ground Organics unless otherwise noted. This week the scallions, radishes, and broccoli are from Lakeside Organics. Spring onions are from Coke Farm. Flowers are grown by the Thomas Farm.