



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

April 20th and 21st, 2011

Discing the Cover Crop, by Jeanne Byrne

While the Lewis Road ranch has been in production mode since late January, Steve's just now working up most of the ground at our home farm and the Redman ranch for our next round of planting. The cover crop had grown tall. The ground was dry enough for tractor work. But alas, the disc-harrow was in pieces in the workshop. The disc blades and bearings needed to be replaced and to get to them the entire implement needed to be dismantled. So several weeks ago he had launched into a project to revamp the disc. He ordered the parts he needed, but when they came in, they were the wrong parts. He brought the disc harrow to the equipment dealer in town and they ordered parts that they thought would work. Those came and still were wrong. It was non-standard equipment and nobody could figure out the correct specifications for new disc parts. In the end, time got the better of him, and he had to reassemble the whole thing with a mix of old and new parts. This led to some sun-up to sun-down days on the tractor this week, especially with the added time to fix a flat tire on the tractor and the irrigation riser that the tractor accidentally ran over on Monday. Overall, a typical week on the farm.

Last week we planted 3 acres of potatoes. This week we'll get another batch of starts from the greenhouse planted out--greens, lettuces, and peppers are all ready to go. But the big news is that the strawberries are now coming in strong and we have plenty for everyone! We're so delighted that these second year berries are producing so well that we're thinking of holding over some portion of the berry crop every year. They may not continue to produce as strongly for the entire season, but there are savings in the costs of buying new plants and mulch and planting labor, plus it uses fewer resources so there is an environmental benefit. A combination of 2nd year and 1st year berries each year should ensure that we have enough nice berries all season long.

Preparing a cover cropped field for planting:

Step 1: mow down cover crop.

Step 2: Follow immediately with disc harrow to incorporate the organic matter into the soil. This step must be done shortly after mowing to obtain the maximum benefit from the cover crop. The freshly mown cover crop immediately starts to lose nutrients to the air if left sitting on top of the soil. We want all those nutrients to stay in our soil so we often have two tractors going at once, the first mowing the cover crop and the second coming right in to each section as it is mowed to disc the crop into the ground.

Step 3: wait for at least 2 weeks for the organic matter to break down enough to work the soil into beds.

Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7: There are several more tractor passes that happen next, generally a pass over the field with a lister to raise the soil into beds, then a Perfecta harrow grooms the bed, we usually apply fertilizer, and finally we use a bed shaper to shape the soil into the final beds.

Step 8: Now it's time to plant, either by planting seeds directly into the ground or transplanting starts from the greenhouse into the prepared rows.

Veggie Notes and Storage Tips

Everything should go into the fridge when you get home. Keep the mushrooms in their paper bag in the fridge.

Strawberries are picked ripe so eat them right away (the first day or two). Top your turnips before you put them in the fridge, to keep the turnips fresh longer, and then use your

turnip greens! They are delicious sauteed or in soups or however you like to use greens. Rapini is also called broccoli raab. If you end up with too many greens in your fridge as the week wears on, make soup!

This Week

Strawberries

Salad Mix

Mei Quin Choi

Tokyo Turnips

Rapini

Collard Greens

Tree Oyster Mushrooms*

Loose Gold or Red Beets*

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

What would Deborah do with this

week's box? There are at least four meals here! Yum! Rapini will get blanched for a minute in boiling water (until vibrant green), then cooled and chopped - I'll use it on a pesto pizza with pesto from the arugula we got a few weeks ago (I put leftovers in my freezer). As soon as the pizzas are out of the oven, I'll reduce the heat to 400 degrees or so and roast the beets for an hour - the skin peels right off after they cool. Then I'll chop them into chunks and toss with balsamic vinegar and olive oil. When I'm ready for lunch, I'll toss the prepped beets with thinly-sliced raw turnips, chopped mei quin choi, the salad

mix, and some feta cheese. Strawberries will go on yogurt or cereal at breakfast. I'll cook the mushrooms in a red-wine reduction with some of green garlic and onions I still have, and serve it over some potatoes and steak, alongside freshly braised collard greens. - Debbie Frazier

Notes/Recipes from Chef Andrew Cohen

Salad mix will allow me to continue with my "dressing of the week" plan. I like to use Thousand Island on chunky salads and on sandwiches such as turkey or pastrami. For the chunky salad I can see roasting the golden beets and adding them to the salad, and maybe dicing a turnip or two and adding them raw.

I will continue to indulge my inner Chinese chef and sauté the mei quin choi with mushrooms and some of the oriental sauces in the refrigerator. I think I will try the oyster

mushrooms and mei quin sautéed with some Hoisin and orange juice with some grilled ginger-orange chicken.

Tokyo turnips are a “go to” vegetable around here, and quick and easy. They will be nice sautéed as a foil to the French dip sandwiches I am planning on with the leftover brisket in the refrigerator. Collards are another favorite here, and I will make Mermaid’s Hair with them, or one of the offshoots of that recipe. Did you know that collards are the oldest form of cultivated cabbage? Collards are one of the faster cooking greens, and they also have the most prominent rib that requires a knife to remove. Collards can have a cabbagey flavor if you select very mature leaves, but I find them to be pleasantly earthy with an almost mushroom-like flavor. They do well being blanched first, and then sautéed in garlic and vinegar, or lend themselves to braising or stewing. If you have small, fine leaves, these can be rolled and sliced thinly for sautés or used raw in salads where a forthright flavor is wanted. Collards are friends to porky/mushroomy flavors, and are enhanced by acids such as vinegar and wine. Collards are excellent for use as wrappers also. Choose large tender leaves, and use a thin sharp knife to pare the stem and rib as thinly as possible while leaving the center of the leaf intact. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to the boil and blanch the leaves a few at a time until just tender. Remove the leaves from the hot water and submerge in ice water to arrest the cooking. Once dry, fill them with a mix of grains and vegetables and maybe some ground meat, and then roll them up and heat through in the oven. This is a fun project to get kids involved in, by the way.

When thinking of rapini, think “turnip” rather than “broccoli”. Rapini is actually classified in the same subspecies as turnips, and the flavor has some of the same turnip qualities. Rapini can be assertive and a little bitter, and even have some of that heat that turnips sometimes have. They also have an inherent sweetness I really like. I like to braise the rapini with red wine and plenty of garlic, or just sauté with oil, garlic, and chili. This sauté makes a good bed for grilled steaks or roast chicken. I also like the idea of using rapini, garlic, onions, and some lemon zest to make a pasta sauce, and will have that this week.

Strawberries will go into a smoothie with vanilla yogurt, bananas, and some coconut if my daughter has her way.

Thousand Island Dressing, from Chef Andrew Cohen

2 TBS apple cider vinegar	1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup ketchup	1/3 cup pickle relish
1 TBS Worcestershire sauce	1 rib of celery, minced
1/2 TBS brown sugar	Salt and pepper to taste

Put all ingredients except salt and pepper into a non-reactive bowl and whisk to thoroughly amalgamate ingredients. Grind fresh pepper over the surface and whisk in. Taste the dressing, then begin to salt. The salt will help pull the flavors into balance, and you will be able to taste the difference between no salt and when you are getting close to perfection. Add just enough so you notice the change in the dressing, but not so much that you taste the salt. Once you do this recipe, you will know what you are tasting for and it will go together in a snap.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Everything is grown by High Ground Organics unless otherwise noted. This week the beets are from Lakeside Organics. Mushrooms are from Far West Fungi. Flowers are grown by the Thomas Farm.

Mermaid’s Hair (Japanese Inflected Shredded Collard Greens), from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch collards, stemmed and cut into fine chiffonade	Water- enough to cover the greens by half an inch
1 TBS neutral flavored oil	1 TBS mirin (a Japanese sweet cooking wine)
2 tsp. soy sauce	1 tsp. juice from pickled ginger

Bring water to a boil, and submerge the greens. Cook until tender, 3-8 minutes. Drain and set aside. Add oil to the pan and heat. Add the greens back into the pan and toss to coat with oil. Make a well in the center of the mess and add the mirin and toss to coat. Drizzle with the soy sauce and the ginger juice. Toss the mess to coat and heat through.

Beef Brisket with Beets, Turnips and Carrots, from Chrissi Brewer

3 teaspoons salt	1/2 teaspoon pepper
3 pounds flanken, chuck, or brisket of beef	2 onions, chopped
2 tablespoons flour	3 cups boiling water
1/4 cup honey or to taste	8 carrots, coarsely grated
1 turnip, coarsely grated	1 beet, coarsely grated

Rub 2 teaspoons of the salt and pepper into the beef. Place in a Dutch oven or heavy pot with the onions and brown slowly over a medium heat. Add the flour, mixing well. Add the water, stirring, until it reaches the boiling point. Cover and simmer slowly for about 1 hour.

Mix the honey in with the meat, then add the vegetables and remaining salt. Cover and bake in a preheated 375-degree oven for an hour and a half, removing the cover for the last 15 to 20 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings, if necessary.

Strawberry-Feta Salad, from Chrissi Brewer

1 cup pecan pieces	1 tsp. sugar
1 pinch cardamom	2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. honey	1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/4 cup rice wine vinegar	2 TBS balsamic vinegar
2 TBS brown sugar	1 cup vegetable oil
salad mix	1 pint fresh strawberries, sliced
1 cup crumbled feta cheese	

In a skillet over medium-high heat, roast the pecans, sugar and cardamom, stirring frequently, until lightly toasted. Remove from heat, and set aside. In a bowl, prepare the dressing by whisking together the garlic, honey, Dijon mustard, vinegar, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, and vegetable oil. In a large bowl, toss together the toasted pecans, lettuce, strawberries, and feta cheese. Cover with the dressing mixture, and toss to serve.

Grilled Beets with Yogurt and Sour Cream, from Chrissi Brewer

6 large beets trimmed (red or gold)	1 1/2 cups of plain nonfat yogurt
1/2 cup chopped chives	Salt and freshly ground pepper

Wrap each beet individually with aluminum foil. Drizzle a little olive oil at the bottom of each packet. Set on the top shelf of the grill for about 45 minutes or until tender. While beets are cooling combine yogurt and chives and spoon into a serving bowl. Unwrap beets and when cool, slip off skins with your fingers. Salt and pepper and serve with yogurt mixture.