



# High Ground Organics

## Community Supported Agriculture

May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011

### Production Notes and News from Steve

We had a good productive week here on the farm. We listed the last twelve or so acres of un-planted ground up into beds. We've been laying down drip tape in the blocks that we will be planting our winter squash into later this week. And we have been planting out lots and lots of transplants—lettuces, broccoli, cabbages, fennel, celery, cauliflower, chard, kale, and peppers.

The unseasonably late rains bring with them many pluses and some minuses. On the downside, we had to pick the strawberries earlier (a little less ripe) than we usually like to, to get them off the plants before the showers began here Monday. Making sure all the fertilizer, tools, boxes, and rain-sensitive implements are under cover is a bit of a hassle. Today (Tuesday) will be an uncomfortable harvest day for our crew. And the hail at our Mountain View Farmers' Market Sunday meant we came home with vegetables that we would easily have sold on a nice day.

But, as far as tillage is concerned, the rains were really working with us this time. After we have listed up beds in the springtime we commonly have to lay out pipes and pre-irrigate fields before making the final tractor passes to finish the beds with. Not only does this keep the dust down, but it makes the heavy clay soils here at our home site, which can be very cloddy, work up into a much finer seed bed. The rains saved us the expense of laying out and then picking up pipe after pre-irrigating these fields. They also save us from having to irrigate the fields that we have already planted for a few days. So we won't complain about the weather this week...much.

In addition to the challenges posed by the weather, this spring we have had the additional challenge of training new employees for some key positions. Aurelio Lopez-Hernandez, who shared most of the tractor driving chores with me, got married last year. He and his wife have started their own farm raising pastured chickens for both meat and eggs. He originally thought he could continue working for us on a part time basis, but the demand for their chickens proved gratifyingly high, and he has been working seven days a week just to keep up. We're beyond delighted to see them making a go of it, but that doesn't mean we don't miss him. During twelve years working together, Aurelio and I had developed a fine rapport together. When he was on the tractor and I was making adjustments to whatever implement he was using, he understood well my grunts and gesticulations—even over the roar of the tractor engine. He knew when I wanted him to raise the implement and by how much, he knew when to pull the tractor forward or when to back it up.

Noe, who we are training to be Aurelio's replacement, is catching on quickly and will make a fine tractor driver. I was unrealistic, however, in how quickly I expected that he should intuit my unspoken intentions. The week before last I paid the price for unclear directions. He was on the tractor spreading fertilizer with an implement that is over ten feet wide and weighs over a ton when fully loaded. The spreader has two stands mounted to the back of it that are made of 1 1/2 square tube. They are secured by lowering them into position and putting a pin through an oversized bracket and through a hole in the tube itself. I motioned for Noe to raise the implement up, and rapped my hand around the tube at the base of the bracket so I could lower it slowly to the point where the pin-hole is lined up. Instead of raising the implement, however, Noe lowered it and the skin and flesh of my palm where rolled up into the 1/4 inch gap between bracket and tube. Fortunately my screams of pain were easier to interpret and he raised the spreader before the skin of my hand was entirely ripped off. After a course of antibiotics, the wound has healed over nicely and I am left with a thick patch of calloused skin as a reminder to be clear and patient when giving directions.

### This Week

Tokyo Market Turnips

Strawberries

Red Butter Lettuce

Oak Leaf Lettuce

Scallions

Mei Quin Choi

Kale

English Peas\*

Mystery

**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet**

### Notes/Recipes from Chef Andrew Cohen

Well, with the return of Winter, or so it seems, I might do a braise of chicken that has turnips in it. I could go with white wine, or do a Mediterranean version that features lemon, and green olives. Or maybe I'll just go with simple and roast the chicken and serve it with a turnip-potato puree a la mashed potatoes. Depending on the mood, I could go North African with cinnamon and cardamom in the puree or just stick with the version with thyme. Mei quin choy will get sautéed up with onions, garlic, and white wine as a simple side dish, or maybe I'll split them, blanch them, and then grill them after a light brushing of ginger and garlic infused oil. The kale will get sautéed and added to orzo pasta tossed with some rounds of Italian sausage that has been blanched and then cut into rounds and sautéed. Scallions will be great in this dish, along with garlic and maybe some red pepper flakes. Should the sun come out and I am grilling, the summer squash (if I get it as the Mystery) gets split the length and then I cut a cross-hatch pattern on the cut surface. The squash gets fresh lemon juice, some garlic and herbs, and then a benediction of good oil an hour before cooking. Salt and pepper just before grilling and I'm happy. I can be equally happy with an order of caramelized summer squash, as are my kids, so keep this in

mind if you are feeding youngsters. I have been feeding this to my kids since they were 8 and 5.

For the English peas, I want to showcase their flavor, so I will go with a classic; braised peas with lettuce and onion. Although it sounds odd to some, it is a dish that works well as long as you do not overcook it. I'd probably serve this with a mild fish such as tilapia or sole. The rest of the lettuce will go to a salad of strawberries, almonds, blue cheese, and candied ginger, dressed with a strawberry vinaigrette.

I have been enjoying the scallions in all sorts of dishes, but they have been a standout at breakfast, lately. Finely sliced, the whites get sautéed, and then the scrambled eggs with avocado, sliced black olives, and a handful of crushed, sort of stale tortilla chips go into the pan. If I have left-over vegetables such as kale, asparagus, or broccoli, these get diced and tossed in as well. Season with cumin, coriander, and garlic powder, top with the greens, and you have a winner. Both of my kids have been requesting larger amounts of green onions each day, and that is fine by me. I'm always happy when they eat a good breakfast with vegetables in it.

**Peas Braised with Scallions and Lettuce**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Here is my riff on a French classic. Although the lettuce may seem an odd thing to include, it really does work here. The only thing to really watch out for is overcooking the peas, so taste one every few minutes, and when they are almost done, add the lettuce to finish off.

2 cups shelled peas (around 1 pound per cup shelled)	½ head butter lettuce, leaves separated and cleaned
6 scallions, green parts only, sliced thinly on the diagonal	2 tablespoons butter
½ teaspoon sugar	salt and pepper to taste
½ cup water	

Split the lettuce leaves through the main rib, or stack the leaves and slice across ½ inch strips. Over medium heat, melt the butter in a 2-quart saucepan. When it stops foaming, add the scallions. Cut just until wilted. Add the sugar and stir in, and then season with salt and pepper. Add the water and bring to a simmer. Add the peas and stir to coat the peas with the seasonings. Cover and cook at a gentle simmer, tossing periodically to ensure even cooking, until almost done. Taste frequently so you can keep track of this. The peas could take as little as 10 minutes and as many as 20. When the peas are almost done, add the lettuce. Cook just to wilt the lettuce. Remove the vegetables to a bowl, and if the liquid in the bottom of the pot is more than a couple spoonful, cook to reduce it so it thickens enough to cling to the vegetables. Taste for seasoning and adjust if needed. This is not a dish that keeps, so serve right away.

*Chef's Notes and Tips:* If you wish, you can cut the head of lettuce into wedges through the root, leaving a little of the base intact so it holds the leaves together. Rinse these wedges well in several changes of water, and add them a little sooner to the pot, gently pushing them into the peas a little so they cook more readily and get sauced better. When the vegetables are done, remove the lettuce wedges first and put them around the edge of the serving vessel, then add the peas and scallions to the center, and then pour the pan sauce over all. Mint goes wonderfully with peas, and you could sliver some and add it

**Raw Honey**

We are offering jars of Kimes Apiary Raw Honey to deliver with the CSA next week. This wonderful raw honey and pollen comes from chemical-free hives (many of which are kept on our Lewis Road farm). Order now, and pick up your honey along with your CSA box May 25th and 26th. To order, send your check made out to High Ground Organics to us by *May 20th*.

Raw Honey 1 lb jar = \$8.00

Moist Pollen 4 oz = \$5.40 (more potent than dried; we will keep it cold until it gets to your pick-up site; it should then be refrigerated or frozen when you get it home.)

just before the lettuce. Whatever you do, don't cook the mint for more than 8 minutes or you find it had become bitter. A ½ teaspoon of thyme would go well with this dish also. Just remember you want to go light with the seasonings and not drown out the flavor of the peas.

**Mashed Turnips**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 medium Yukon Gold potato, around 6 ounces, peeled	6-8 Tokyo turnips, peeled
6-8 scallions, roots and green parts removed, green tops reserved	4-6 ounces cream, ½&½, or milk at room temperature
2-4 tablespoons butter at room temperature	1 teaspoon fresh thyme, minced
Salt and pepper to taste	

Cut the potato and the turnips into ½ – ¾ inch pieces and put into a pot. Finely slice the scallions and add to the pot. Fill the pot with cold water to just cover the vegetables, and add in a good pinch of salt (around a teaspoon). Bring the pot to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Gently simmer until the vegetables are just tender, around 15-20 minutes. While the vegetables simmer, finely slice the scallion tops so you have around a half cup of them. When the vegetables are tender, drain them, reserving 1 cup of the liquid for thinning the puree if you want to use something other than one of the dairy products listed. Return the vegetables to the pot, and place the pot over low heat for a couple minutes to drive off extra moisture, stirring and to prevent scorching.

Remove the pot from the heat and start mashing the vegetables. Add the butter to the pot and mash, and then season with salt and pepper and add the thyme. Stir to incorporate well. Now add the dairy of your choice to thin the puree to the consistency you prefer, stirring well to blend all the flavors. (If you prefer not to use dairy for the puree, use the reserved cooking water instead.)

Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper if needed. Vegetable purees, especially those with potatoes, I find can usually stand more salt than I would normally think prudent. You might want to add more butter for a smoother, richer taste as well. Scatter the sliced scallion tops over the puree, and stir in, or not, as you prefer.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Everything is grown by High Ground Organics unless otherwise noted. English peas this week are from Coke Farm. Flowers are grown by the Thomas Farm.