



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

June 15th and 16th, 2011

The Smell of Soil, from Chrissi Brewer

Steve's working in the field outside my office window. Now, my "office" at High Ground Organics is a marvelous yurt that overlooks the apple orchard that overlooks the potato field that overlooks the Harkins Slough. I can't imagine a lovelier place to work. I look out my window and see the tractor is discing up a little wedge of land in front of the apple trees. I think chard will be planted there. With each pass I get another burst of fragrance that few people get to experience. It's the smell of soil being turned; it's the smell of soil that has been allowed to digest the resources below the surface, it's the smell of life.

Now, not many folks know how to appreciate the smell of good soil--I may be one of a small club. One Christmas I opened a present from my daughter and it was a bottle of perfume called "Dirt." I don't think it was a big seller, but I went back and bought several bottles...it's an acquired sense--or should that be scents? As I breathe in the aroma of the field being turned, I also like to imagine what's under the surface of the field, knowing that beneath the area that I can see, is a whole universe of organisms that are working hard to create a medium for plant growth and health. It goes along with the old saying that if you grow healthy soil, you will harvest healthy plants.

The soil that I see Steve cultivating out there is healthy. The organic material being turned under will produce nutrients that will feed the next crop, that material will retain moisture and prevent erosion, that material will provide for a multitude of microorganisms that will protect against pests and pathogens that are harmful. We don't often get a chance to see that kind of activity when looking out our windows.

I'm not sure if my love for the smell of earth comes from some ancient memory embedded in my DNA of a past life spent growing food for my family to survive or the fact that I'm just a big kid who likes to play in the dirt. Whatever the case, I love my office window.

Veggie Notes

Avocados should be stored out of the fridge. (You can keep them in the fridge if you don't want them to ripen too soon.) They are ripe when there is just a little give when you squeeze them. Everything else should go in the refrigerator. Top the carrots so the greens don't continue to draw nutrients from the roots. These rapini greens have tender stems, so it isn't necessary to remove the stems before cooking.

Strawberry U-Pick

Saturday, June 18th

Need some extra strawberries for freezing or jamming? Come out to the farm this Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm to pick your own. \$1.75/lb for CSA-members, \$2.00/lb for non-members. Location: 521 Harkins Slough Road in Watsonville.

Notes/Recipes from Chef Andrew Cohen

Cilantro is an herb that never fails to inspire me. I like it for dressings and seasonings. Southwest, Mexican, Southeast-Asia, and Middle Eastern food all utilize it, so cilantro in the kitchen is like a plane ticket to somewhere else. I might puree a bunch of it with chilies and onions and use it as a stir-fry lubricant, but I'll probably use some for a riff on the Italian "salsa verde" and use it to garnish shrimp. Perhaps a salad with a lime vinaigrette and cold shrimp dressed with the cilantro salsa verde and diced avocado. I'll also use some for eggs scrambled with tortilla chips, onion, olives, and chilies for breakfast. Another place avocados would be divine.

On the other end of the spectrum from avocados, rapini pleases me with its assertive flavor and almost mustard like bite. Bitter is a flavor a lot of America has a hard time with, but I enjoy it, especially as a foil for sweet or bland. I also like making sauces of vegetables, and this is a good vegetable to do it with. Blanching rapini mitigates some of its aggressive nature, so I would do that and toss it with fennel and onions and some lemon-both zest and juice. I could eat it as a side, but I really like the idea of topping this week's carrots with the rapini cooked to a chunky sauce. I'd do a basic glazed carrot recipe with some fennel powder to link to the fennel in the rapini, then toss the carrots and rapini together

for a study in contrasts-both in color and in taste. (See our website for this recipe.) This idea would work with summer squash as well. Grilling the squash cut into chunks would make it a great foil for the rapini.

Strawberries might find their way into waffles for a fun dessert or breakfast. As dessert, I would slice the berries and hit them with a little sugar and balsamic vinegar, and then add them to waffle mix that has some vanilla added. Top the waffles with vanilla ice cream or vanilla yogurt and you're done. If I get blueberries they would go well in waffles or pancakes. I also like them just fine with granola and milk for breakfast. As part of dinner, I would cook them with a little sugar and water to make a sauce. Fry up pork chops, deglaze the pan with brandy, cook a bunch of minced shallot, and then add the blueberry sauce with a little stock. Cook down to thicken and enjoy your dinner.

This Week

Red and Green Oak Leaf
Lettuce

Strawberries

Green Onions

Cilantro

Bunched Mokum Carrots

Rapini Greens

Bacon Avocados*

Mystery (Summer Squash or
Blueberries)

Flowers: Sweet William,
Sunflowers, Snadragons

Scrambled Eggs with Tortilla Chips, Avocado, Cilantro, and ..., from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This dish is a riff on a Mexican dish called “migas,” which is traditionally made with older corn tortillas. You can use old stale tortilla chips and smaller broken bits in the bottom of the bag, or fresh ones work fine too. My son is not a fan of eggs, but this dish never fails to please him, plus it is a great vehicle for getting vegetables into the kids. I use leftover zucchini, peppers, grilled onions, broccoli, and even green beans. Adding avocado is really nice, especially if it is chilled. The contrast between the hot egg and cold avocado is fun. When I have tomatoes, I love to scatter them over also. Leftover beans? Heat them up and bed the eggs on them. This recipe is a guideline. Play with it and make it your own. Be sure to add the oil and water to the eggs to prevent sticking.

3 eggs	2 cups tortilla chips, broken up into 1 to 1½ inch bits (Or smaller. Just not into teeny crumbs.)
2 ounces (½ a small can) roasted green chilies	2 ounces (½ a small can) sliced black olives
4 green onions, finely sliced, whites separated from greens	½ bunch fresh cilantro, rinsed and dried well, stems minced and leaves separated-both kept separate.
½ avocado, cut into ½ inch dice (Or more. I like lots of avocado here.)	2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced, or a couple shakes of powdered garlic
Olive oil as needed (At least 2 oz)	Salt and pepper to taste.
Spices to taste (I use a mix of ground cumin and coriander seed with oregano and thyme.)	
Optional: Up to 1 cup of chopped leftover vegetables such as roasted pepper, onion, broccoli, zucchini, etc. Cut everything to roughly the same size, around ¼ inch.	
Optional: 1 to ½ cup grated cheese	
Optional: 1/3 cup sour cream, thick yogurt, labne, or other thick creamy dairy product	

Break the eggs into a bowl large enough to hold the eggs and some ingredients without crowding. Add 1-2 TBS of oil and 2-3 TBS cool water to the eggs. Whisk really well. Add in spices and season with salt and pepper. If you are using garlic powder, add it now.

Heat an 8-inch skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add enough oil to liberally coat the bottom of the pan. When the oil is hot, add the whites of the onions and cook just until they turn translucent. Add in the chopped cilantro stem and stir in, cooking just until they lose their raw quality. If you adding optional chopped leftovers, add them now and cook until they are warmed. Add the chilies to the pan and cook until warm. If you are using fresh garlic, add it now, cooking until fragrant, but not burning. Add the olives and stir to mix with the rest of the ingredients. Add the tortilla chips to the egg mixture and stir to coat. (If you add the chips in too soon they absorb too much egg and just sort of melt into the eggs.) Add in most of the green onions.

Center the ingredients in the pan and pour the egg mixture over them. Let the eggs cook a minute or two, then give the handle a shake. The eggs should be beginning to set. Start to stir the eggs with a spatula, getting the bottom of the pan to prevent burning. Keep cooking and stirring, allowing the eggs

to rest on the pan bottom so the tortillas get crisped here and there. When the eggs are done they should no longer have lots of runny egg, but they should still be a little moist. To serve, either transfer to plates or a serving bowl, and scatter the avocado over the eggs, followed by the cilantro leaves and remaining green onions. A dollop of sour cream or not as you choose, and the dish is ready to serve.

Chef's Notes and Tips: Depending on your pan, you may need more or less oil in the eggs. I use it to have a better chance of eggs releasing from dubious pans. If you use milk in scrambled eggs, there is more likelihood of sticking and scorching as well.

Cilantro Salsa Verde, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This is a mix of herbs, alliums, and citrus inspired by the classic Italian “salsa verde” made of lemon zest, capers, herbs, and garlic-at the very least-and is used in the same way. Top fish, chicken, meat, or tofu with it, use as a marinade for tofu, or use as a dip. It is really good with hot or cold shrimp.

1 bunch of cilantro, washed and dried	½ bunch green onions, greens and whites separated, sliced very fine
2 cloves garlic, peeled and de-germed, minced	1 TBS fresh oregano, minced
1 tsp. coriander seed, ground	Salt and pepper to taste
1/3 cup lime juice (you may not need it all)	¼ cup Meyer lemon juice, (you may not need it all)
Pinch of sugar if needed	1 TBS olive oil

Finely slice the cilantro stems and put in a non-reactive bowl. Scatter garlic over the stems, and add a pinch of salt and toss to mix. Add the whites of the onion and toss. Allow to sit for 5-10 minutes while the salt softens them. Sprinkle the oregano over the ingredients, and do the same with the coriander. Scatter the green onion over the contents, and gently mix. Add half the lime juice and half the lemon juice. Mix gently. Season with pepper. Add the cilantro leaves and, again, mix gently. Taste. If the salsa is dry, add more of the juice and mix in. Taste for balance. If it is too tart/acidic, sprinkle with sugar, tasting for balance. Drizzle with the oil and stir in. Use or store in the refrigerator. It will last 2-3 days.

Chef's Notes and Tips: A sharp knife really does make a difference. The flavor of cilantro that is smashed takes on a muddy quality, frequently with a strong soapy flavor to the leaves. Green onions suffer from a dull knife as well, becoming dull and breaking down quickly. If your knife is not all it could be, think about using a sharp pair of scissors. These are great for trimming leafy herbs such as cilantro and parsley from stems easily. If you want to make this salsa more about the citrus, use a zester and get some of the skin from the lime and lemon and them mince it very finely and add it in with the green onions. You could also use Meyer lemon and orange, and add a touch of rice vinegar for the acid. Marjoram could be substituted for the oregano for a sweeter, softer flavor, and flat leaf parsley could be used to tone down the cilantro. A little bit of minced serrano or jalapeno will add heat, but keep it light or it will simply overwhelm the other flavors.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Everything is grown by High Ground Organics unless otherwise noted. Bacon avocados are from Marsalisi Farm. Flowers are grown by the Thomas Farm.