



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

June 8th and 9th, 2011

Production Update from Steve

Some of you will be receiving the first blueberries that we have picked this year (don't worry, there are plenty more to come, and we will rotate picking days to be sure that everybody gets some in the next few weeks). Of the four varieties that we planted, Southmoon is the clear favorite so far. (The other three are Misty, O'Neill, and Jewel.) The Southmoon plants are vigorous and healthy, they are loaded with berries, and the flavor is excellent. Interestingly, contrary to what the nursery's catalog says, all four varieties seem to be maturing at about the same time. We originally chose these four varieties so that they would mature sequentially, giving us a longer harvest period. Whether this is due to the odd weather this year, or the fact that we are so close to the coast (the nursery's Rep said that he wasn't aware of anybody doing blueberries so near the ocean), I don't know. On the plus side, the berries of all four varieties seem to be maturing at a nice measured rate. This is great for us because it will give us a prolonged harvest period. The large commercial growers like a concentrated fruit-set so they don't have to keep sending their harvest crews back in. We prefer to be able to harvest the fruit over a long period of time as it comes ripe.

The bird netting is working well, though an occasional starling manages to find its way in—they must be squeezing under the netting where it sits on the ground. To remove the birds we need to have one person open the netting at the far end while another moves alongside the row scaring the bird towards the opening. Chasing starlings out of the blueberry netting sounds like a good summer job for the kids.

For me, the frenetic pace of spring has given way somewhat to a more settled work week. I am no longer in a mad struggle to get ground worked up to plant into, and to stay ahead of our crew. Between weeding, thinning, planting, and harvesting there is more than enough work for everyone. But to a certain degree I am able to catch my breath, try to get organized, and see to the things like maintenance and repair that tend to get overlooked in the spring frenzy.

We'll have two strawberry u-picks this June—this coming Saturday and next Saturday (June 11th and 18th). Come out to our home farm on Harkins Slough Rd. in Watsonville from 10 am to 2 pm if you want to pick your own strawberries for freezing or jamming. Bring your own containers if you can, though we will have flats and baskets available. Cost for berries is \$1.75 per pound for current CSA members; \$2.00 per pound for non-members.

Strawberry U-Picks

June 11th and 18th

Need some extra strawberries for freezing or jamming? Come out to the farm this Saturday or next 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.

This Week

Little Gem and/or Red Leaf Lettuce

Strawberries

Red Radishes

Bunched Spinach

Bunched Mokum Carrots

Red Beets OR Mei Quin Choy

Lacinato Kale OR Red Chard

Mystery (Summer Squash, Fava Beans or Blueberries)

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

Veggie Notes

Everything should go in the refrigerator when you get home. Top the beets and cook the greens the first day or two for best freshness. The carrots also should be topped so the greens don't continue to draw nutrients from the roots. Be sure to wash bunched spinach well (3 times is a rule of thumb, or until the wash water stays clear) because the shape of spinach leaves holds on to dirt.

Notes/Recipes from Chef Andrew Cohen

This week I'll continue to play with grilling lettuces and using them as vegetables. They are great as a side dish, but I might use them as a "salad" with some grilled strawberries as well. Along the line of my joy in taking something and giving a little twist, I like the idea of caramelizing strawberries for breakfast, serving them as is or on top of waffles or pancakes. If I get

blueberries, they will probably disappear with granola, but I might cook them down into a sauce with shallots and thyme to top grilled chicken or pork chops. If I get favas, I will use them and the radishes for a favorite of mine, a sauté of favas and radishes that tastes great and looks beautiful on the plate with the green of the favas deepening and the radishes turning a beautiful pale red. Carrots will be eaten for lunch, or maybe slivered and cooked up with mei quin and seasoned with ginger, garlic, and a touch of sesame oil for another dish that is pretty on the plate and great tasting. If I get summer squash, I might cut it into chunks and roast or grill it to crisp up the edges but keep it from getting mushy in the center. I like to marinate the squash in lemon juice, garlic, and rosemary, and then toss them in some oil to coat a while before actually showing them the heat. If beets come my way, I will do the stand-by—roasting and marinating in vinegar so I have them ready at a moment's notice for salad or dinner.

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

Sauté of Favas and Radishes, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

2 pounds of favas in the shell (about 2 cups peeled)	1 bunch of red radishes, tops and “tails” removed
½-1 TBS good unsalted butter	2 TBS flavorful extra virgin olive oil
High quality large crystal sea salt or kosher salt to taste	Fresh ground pepper to taste

Bring a 3 qt. pot of water to a boil. While the water comes to a boil, slit the fava pods and remove the beans. When the water is boiling add the favas and blanch briefly (large favas about 60 second, little ones for 30 seconds). Drain the beans and immerse in cold water to arrest the cooking. Use a thumbnail to break the skin of the bean a little and then “pinch” the bean to eject it from the skin. Place the beans in a bowl and set aside.

Stem the radishes and use a sharp knife to cut off the ends so they are flat. Slice the radishes into coins. If the favas are small, slice the radishes 1/8” thick. For larger favas, cut the radish coins around ¼” thick. This is so the tastes and textures of each remain compatible. Heat 2 pans over low to medium heat. When the pans are hot, add the butter to one and oil to the other. When the fats are hot (butter melts and oil shimmers) add the radishes to the butter and the favas to the oil. Cook gently to just cook through/heat the vegetables. When they are warm through, turn up the heat under the favas to high and when they start to sizzle add the radishes, tossing to mix. Remove from the heat and season with a dusting of pepper and a generous sprinkling of salt. Serve right away.

Chef’s Tips and Notes: A clove of garlic can be cooked into the oil to season the favas, shreds of sage are also a nice touch, but go lightly. This is dish about subtlety, both in flavor and color. The dish is a lovely contrast of pale green and red, almost pink.

When it comes to peeling favas, I frequently do it at some time other than before dinner. If I am watching a movie at home, reading a book, I will shell the beans then and bag them for later use. Enlisting the help of children is a great way to get favas done, and enlisting the help of younger children is a great way to get them interested in vegetables. I have often found the kids will at least try something they normally wouldn’t if they had a hand in its creation.

Chard with Minted Breadcrumbs and Bacon, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

The bacon is optional, and the dish is still good without it, but it really adds an extra dimension that makes this a standout dish.

1 bunch red chard, leaves separated from stems	1 small brown onion, halved lengthwise and peeled, diced ¼ inch
Fresh mint leaves, enough to yield 1 heaping TBS finely sliced	½ piece thick cut bacon, cut across the length into ¼ inch batons
½ - 1 cup bread crumbs	½ cup white wine
Salt and pepper to taste	Olive oil as needed

Cut the stems into ¼ inch long bits, and wash well. Drain and set aside. Stack the mint leaves one atop the other, then roll into a tight cylinder. Using a very sharp knife, slice across the cylinder as thinly as you can. Fluff up the slivered mint and transfer to a container and reserve. Heat a 10-inch sauté

pan over medium-high heat. When hot, film the pan with oil. When the oil is hot, add the onions, and toss to coat.

While the onions begin to cook, (keep an eye on the onions to prevent burning) stack the chard leaves and roll into a cylinder. Slice the cylinder into 1-inch slices*, then cut across these to “chop” the leaves into smaller bits. Tip the leaves into a bowl of cold water and wash the chard, swirling the leaves and then lifting them out of the water so the dirt is left behind in the bowl. Repeat this a couple times at least until the chard is clean. Toss the leaves into a colander to drain. Do not worry about getting all the water out.

When the onions are softened and just starting to color, add the chard stems, tossing to coat with oil. Add more oil if needed. Cook a couple minutes, then add half the wine, and cook until it has evaporated. Make a well in the center of the onion/stems mélange, and add the bacon. Cook until the bacon is browned and has rendered its fat. Toss and stir to mix the bacon and fat into the rest of the vegetables.

While the bacon is cooking, drizzle the breadcrumbs with just enough oil to coat them so they do not feel dry. Sprinkle with a little salt and pepper and toss to mix it in. Reserve crumbs for when needed. Add the leaves to the pan, stirring to mix all the ingredients. Pour the rest of the wine over the contents of the pan, and cook until the chard leaves have wilted. When the leaves are just wilted, push the vegetables to the side of the pan and then add the breadcrumbs to the center of the pan. Cook, stirring gently, until crumbs are golden. At this point, stir the contents of the pan together to combine. Sprinkle the mint slivers over the pan, and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Chef’s Notes and Tips:

*This process of stacking leaves of vegetables or herbs, rolling tightly into a cylinder, and slicing them is called a “chiffonade” in restaurants. It is easier than trying to slice a random pile of leaves, and ensures uniform pieces.

If you do not want to use the bacon in the dish, try substituting chopped pistachios when you add the breadcrumbs. A pinch of smoked paprika could fill in the bacon flavor also. Add this to the breadcrumbs and oil mixture.

Caramelized Strawberries with Vanilla and Cinnamon, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

2 cups strawberries, hulled and halved lengthwise	1 TBS vanilla sugar OR 1 TBS sugar and 1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. powdered cinnamon	Butter as needed

Place the berries into a non-reactive bowl. If using the vanilla sugar, just sprinkle it over the berries and toss to coat evenly. If using vanilla and sugar, sprinkle the berries with the vanilla and toss to coat. Then add the sugar and toss to coat. Place the berries cut-side up, and lightly dust with cinnamon. Place a 10-inch non-stick pan over medium-high heat and get hot. Lightly butter the pan, using just enough to film the pan. Place the berries cut-side down in the hot butter. Cook until the surface is caramelized. Turn the berries and cook just enough to caramelize the tops a bit. Serve hot.

Chef’s Notes and Tips: Try these at breakfast on their own or on waffles and pancakes. They are good for dessert with ice cream, with or without whipped cream. They are also nice with a creamy vanilla yogurt. Serves: 2-4.