



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

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

## Production Update, from Steve

Even while we are just getting started on harvesting some of our summer crops, August is a sprint for the finish line production-wise. This week the very last of our successive plantings will go into the greenhouse. And through the middle of next month, we will be making the last plantings of the crops that we seed directly into the field, like carrots, beets, scallions, parsley, cilantro and snap peas. Relative to our spring and early summer plantings, these last plantings will be larger. Because they will be maturing during the shorter and cooler days of fall we will have a much longer window in which to harvest them. A well timed August/September planting can carry us a good way into winter for harvesting. A good illustration of this is the herb cilantro, which literally gives us a week to harvest it before it sends up a seeder stalk during the late spring/early summer. A

September planting, on the other hand, slows so much that we can harvest from it for months.

At our new Lewis Road farm, we are primarily planting things that mature fairly quickly, like radishes, arugula, mei quin choi, Tokyo market turnips, and the like. Because the soil there is sandy and prone to erosion, we plan to take them out of production and plant cover crops early in fall. One exception is the field where we have planted the first of our avocado trees. The field we chose is ideally suited for the purpose—sandy well-drained soil, south facing, and situated high enough on the hillside so that it should be protected from frost during the winter. The variety we chose is Lamb-Hass, a third generation descendant of Hass that is very productive and has great flavor.

As with any new piece of land, there has been a learning curve in getting to know the Lewis Road ground. We have had many successes and a few failures there this year. We had some plantings of carrots, cucumbers, and peppers that have not done well due to soil borne pests or diseases. But one thing we have found does exceptionally well there is beans. In heavier soils, the seeds are prone to rot before they germinate. But the Lewis Road soil is so well drained that we get beautiful stands of seedlings. And because beans are in the legume family and capable of fixing their own nitrogen, they are well suited to soils with low residual nitrogen. Beginning next week, the first of the filet beans will start to appear in your boxes and in the weeks after that we will be harvesting shell beans, romano and regular green beans.

We are harvesting the first of the padron peppers to balance out the strawberry shares this week, as our strawberry production is starting to drop off in the second-year berry patch. We're growing the padrons at our home farm. Unlike

most peppers, which need hot growing conditions, the padrons do fine in a cooler climate. Because they are essentially harvested prematurely, they don't need heat to give them color and size. It also means they take forever to harvest, which is why they are so expensive to buy. Padron peppers are worth it, though. We'll put more in the boxes next week, so you'll all get them soon.

## Veggie Notes

Put everything into the fridge when you get home except the **potatoes**, which should be stored in a cool dark place. You can chop the tops off the **celery** if it's too big to fit in your crisper drawer. Save the tops in a bag for making soup stock if you want. Chop the tops off the **radishes** for storage--the tops can be cooked, but it's best to use them in the first day or two as they wilt quickly. Use the **arugula** early in the week also. Some of you will get **Padron peppers** this week, and the rest of you will get them over the next couple weeks. Padrons are rreeeaaallly good. If you've never tried one you are in for a treat. The way that I first had them was heated over a grill—usually I just cook them over high heat for a few minutes in a little oil, turning and slightly browning on a couple sides, salt, let cool for a minute, then you grab one by the stem end and eat it whole. Wow. They are not spicy at all, just addictively good. (Well, occasionally you get one that's spicy—it adds a little suspense and excitement to your meal!)

## Notes from Chef Andrew

With this beautiful weather we have had the last few days, I am happy to see **padron peppers** in our boxes. I will fry them in the traditional manner (see recipe), and probably eat them out on the deck as an appetizer. Another way to enjoy these would be to grill a steak and slice it thinly, pull the stems from the pepper and chop them up and scatter them over the steak with some

**arugula** and some olive oil. Maybe I'll continue with the Spanish theme, and have the **potato arugula** frittata along with a simple salad of **lettuce** and thin slices of **radish** soaked in ice water to crisp them, and dress the salad with a sherry vinegar and fruity olive oil dressing. **Summer squash** makes for an easy gratin, especially if you have some soffrito in the fridge or freezer. Bias slice the squash and lay it overlapping itself on a bed of soffrito or sautéed onions, drizzle with oil and herbs and bake for 30 minutes or until golden in a 400°F oven. This is good hot or at room temperature, and works well as sandwich stuffing. Some leftover gratin, **arugula**, mozzarella, and some oil in a roll and lunch is served. All of

## This Week

Strawberries OR Padron  
Peppers

Bunched Arugula

Romanesco

Celery

Potatoes (Red-gold, Romanze,  
OR Desiree)

Summer Squash OR Slicing  
Cucumbers

Romaine OR Green Leaf  
Lettuce

Red Radishes

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

the **potato** varieties that might come in this week's box are great for potato salad (among other things), so keep that in mind. Try making one with **celery** and **cucumber** dressed with a vinaigrette made with cider vinegar and using some honey mustard in there. Adding some **celery** to the sautéed **cucumbers** would be nice, also. For the **romanesco**, you could dunk it in boiling water until it just loses its raw quality, and then pour a white balsamic vinaigrette over it and cool it in the refrigerator for a lightly pickled vegetable. Try cutting the head of **romanesco** into wedges and marinating it in orange juice, olive oil, cumin, coriander seed, and a pinch of cinnamon, and then roasting it until cooked through and caramelized on the surfaces and edges, around 15-20 minutes. If life looks to be really busy, just make a giant "chopped" salad, with **celery, radish, summer squash, cucumber, and lettuce**. An excellent way to get to plenty of different vegetables, and lots of crunch. Add some chicken or tofu, blue cheese, nuts, and /or avocado to really liven things up. I'm still enjoying my **strawberries** plain, but I have to say last week's seemed to be more than exceptional. I say this because I ate ¾s of them while standing in front of the sink, stopping only when my daughter asked if I was going to leave any for her...

**Fried Padron Peppers**, from Chef Andrew Cohen

Padrons are a treat that until recently were found only in Spain, usually at a tapas joint. Remember not to over load the pan with peppers or you lower the temperature of the oil too much and wind up with limp, soggy peppers. The idea is to blister the skin and brown the peppers a little. By the way, smaller Padron peppers are usually mild, but a hot one shows up now and again. This is part of the joy of eating these peppers I think, that little thrill you get wondering if the next one might sting a little.

Padron peppers	Oil as needed for frying
Salt to taste-use a large crystal salt such as Maldon, Murray River, or Diamond Crystal kosher	

Wash the peppers and dry thoroughly. Any water on the peppers may cause the oil to "pop" and spatter. Heat a pan, preferably one with high sides like a sauteuse or chefs pan, over medium high heat. When the pan is hot, add the oil to a depth of around a ½ inch. Heat the oil until the surface is shivering. Put a pepper into the oil-it should start cooking immediately. If not, retrieve the pepper and wait another minute or so before trying again. When the oil is hot, add peppers to the pan, taking care not to crowd them too much lest you drop the oil temperature too much.

Cook the peppers just until they are blistering and browning. They may puff up a bit, that is fine. As soon as the peppers are colored, use a slotted spoon or spider to remove them from the oil, giving the spoon handle a little tap on the edge of the pan to rid the peppers of more oil. Transfer the peppers to a plate lined with paper towels to absorb excess oil. Sprinkle the peppers with a good pinch of salt evenly, and start the next batch if you are cooking more. Eat the peppers while still hot or warm, with bread, or not. Typically, beer, sherry, or a glass of cold crisp verdelho is the drink of choice.

*Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. All veggies and fruits were grown by High Ground Organics. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.*

**Cooking Demos - Williams Sonoma, Los Gatos**

Thursday, August 25th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, \$10

Saturday, September 10th from 10 to 12 pm, \$10

Sign up at [www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/](http://www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/).

**Romanesco, Sauteed with Pine Nuts and Garlic**,

from Chrissi Brewer

1 Romanesco Cauliflower	1 tbsp Olive Oil
2 tbsp thinly sliced shallots	4 cloves of garlic, sliced
1 tsp crushed red chilies	1 tbsp pine nuts
1 tbsp lemon juice	

Remove the tough edges of the cauliflower and separate the florets taking care not to break the individual florets. Wash the florets and place in a sauce pan with 2 tbsp water. Bring this to a boil and close the pan with a tight lid. Let it cook for 2 minutes on medium heat, then remove and immediately plunge the florets in cold water to stop the cooking.

Heat a large pan and roast the pine nuts and keep aside. Add the oil and sauté the shallots till soft. Season with salt and the crushed chilies. Stir in the garlic and the drained florets and sauté gently on high heat for 2 minutes. Add the pine nuts and remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon juice and mix well. Serve warm.

**Sautéed Cucumbers**, from Chef Andrew Cohen

2 slicing cucumbers, peeled in strips if the skin is tender, otherwise remove it all	1 TBS each of butter and neutral flavored oil such as grapeseed
½ ounce of white wine such as Riesling or other light wine	2 tsp. of 1 fresh herb such as dill, mint, tarragon, or flat leaf parsley
1 pinch of salt and maybe a little fresh ground pepper	

Slice the cucumber lengthwise and use a narrow spoon to scoop out the seeds. Slice the cucumber into ¼ inch slices. Heat a 10 inch skillet over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add the oil and butter and allow to melt. When the butter stops foaming, add the cucumbers and toss to coat. Add the wine and cook down to evaporate, tossing gently to keep the cucumbers from browning. If they heat seems high, reduce it to medium-low. Cook the cucumbers gently, just until the turn pale and lose their raw edge, becoming tender. Season lightly with salt and a very little amount of pepper, then add the herb of choice, and toss to combine thoroughly. Cook a moment more to wake up the flavors of the herbs, then serve.

*Chef's Notes and Tips:* If you want to add some depth to the dish, fine dice half an onion and cook it gently in the butter/oil mix until cooked but not browned at all, or use 3 finely diced shallots. If using shallots, add the wine to the shallots rather than the cucumbers to soften the flavor of them. You could add some blanched lemon zest to the pan just before adding the cucumbers-about a half teaspoon, say-and use 1 tablespoon of lemon juice instead of wine, or use a little sweet white wine.

**Aunt Virginia's Veggie Dip**, from Jeanne

1 cup mayonnaise	1 tsp. curry powder
1 tsp. ketchup	

Combine ingredients. Dip veggies (such as celery or raw or steamed romanesco).