



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Long Live Tenacious Sprout, from Jeanne

On Saturday, Steve and I went to San Francisco for the memorial of a dear old friend, Miguel Wooding. Miguel was one of the most selfless, smart, and energetic people I've ever met. He had dedicated the past 20 years of his life to helping San Francisco tenants to stay in their homes and providing homes for those who were homeless. Miguel tragically lost his life when he was hit by a jet ski while snorkeling on vacation. His death leaves a gaping hole in so many lives, and even though we hadn't seen him in 15 years, we still feel his loss as acutely as if we had been with him just yesterday.

The memorial was bittersweet—a juxtaposition of desperate sadness with the joy of seeing old friends with whom we had never meant to lose touch. Among those in attendance were several of the people with whom we initially planned our escape from the city to farm life—a group we called Tenacious Sprout. In 1992-93 we met many times to discuss the details of how we would buy, organize, and live on our not-yet-existent farm. We pooled money into a \$10,000 CD, we researched bylaws of Intentional Communities, and we went to a conference on ways to afford farmland put on by the group Equity Trust. We bicycled to the Russian River for a retreat at which we had long discussions of what sort of lifestyles we would find acceptable within our community, how we would earn and share our money, how many people and which ones we would include in our farm, what sort of housing we would have. Looking back, it is easy to see that we were missing any real understanding of a key part of our plan—farming. But I'm also amazed at how much effort, heart, and energy we put into our planning.

I don't think we ever consciously disbanded Tenacious Sprout. Steve came down to work on his uncle's farm and take classes in agroecology at UCSC. I moved to Oakland for a job in energy conservation. Other members moved, got interesting jobs, or pursued teaching credentials. After a couple years, Steve's uncle Jerry helped us launch our own farm on a few acres of leased land, I moved down to Watsonville with Steve, and our farm was born. Amid the craziness of actually farming (and having children), San Francisco grew further and further away. But as I think back on it now, I feel that our farm is still wrapped in the tendrils of the tenacious sprout that sprung from a seed planted by so many friends long ago.

*Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. All veggies and fruits were grown by High Ground Organics, except Tarragon, which is from Everlasting Gardens. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.*

## Veggie Notes

Tarragon is one of those herbs that is far stronger fresh to dried, so it's used in small amounts when fresh (1 TBS fresh tarragon is equivalent to about 1 tsp. dried). If you have more than you need now, you can dry it or freeze it. It'll keep in a sealed bag for 3 to 5 months in the freezer. You can also make tarragon vinegar by putting a few sprigs into a sterilized bottle of distilled white vinegar for a few days. I like adding tarragon to roast potatoes when I have it (toss potatoes in olive oil and add 1-2 TBS chopped tarragon before roasting).

Tomatoes will be in the boxes next week!

## Notes from Chef Andrew

The first thing that jumps out when I see the list is the **golden beets**. While playing on the grill, I threw a handful of garlic cloves on the edge of the grill and have been experimenting with them. So I'll roast the **beets** and drizzle them with white balsamic vinegar when they are done, and I will make a vinaigrette for them with a mashed clove of the roasted garlic as part of the base. A little sweet-hot mustard will help make the dressing creamy and give a nice balance to the sweetness and earthiness of the beets and garlic. Another way to go would be to make a **tarragon** vinaigrette to dress the beets and bed them on some chopped or shredded **lettuce**. A chunky vegetable salad might be in order as well—cut some **Romanesco** and some **broccoli** into small bits and blanch them, and as they cool toss with some dressing so they absorb it. Chill a while, and then toss these with some beets and dress with the garlic dressing or something like a creamy feta or blue cheese dressing. Another cold vegetable preparation that is one of my favorites is a creamy cold **filet (haricot vert) bean** salad. Blanch the beans and dress with a whipped cream based dressing (See recipe). **Filet beans** are good when cooked lightly, but do try them cooked longer so they are tender and develop a nutty taste. I like them with a squeeze of lemon and some olive oil, or chop some almonds and cook them in browned butter and toss the beans in this. Another use for these beans is an old traditional Ligurian pasta dish—cook the green beans along with some small **potatoes** (or pieces) such as the Bintje, and when tender, toss with bucatini and plenty of pesto. It may sound odd, but it is a winning combo. Thinking of **potatoes**, I like the “stew” (braise really) of **Chantenay carrots** with **potatoes** for my “cook the vegetable like a main/meat course” file. The idea is to treat vegetables as the main course and cook them in a way similar to a meat dish, so here I brown the carrots a little and then braise them

## This Week

Chantenay Carrots

Romanesco OR Broccoli

Gold Beets

Lettuce

Mei Quin Choi

Strawberries OR Filet Beans  
OR Padron Peppers

Bintje Potatoes

Tarragon\*

**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet**

with onion, celery, garlic, and potatoes a la pot roast or stew. If you want to travel using this dish, just add a few spices and maybe a bit of another veg like fennel or peppers, then carry on. You could actually do something like this with the **Romanesco**, breaking up the head into florets, flash sautéing in oil over high heat, and then adding a small amount of liquid to the pan and covering it and gently cooking it until just done. This week I do **padrons** pan fired, so they have a little charred flavor to them. Excellent with verdelho or ice cold beer. As I have 2 school BBQs this week that each request salads, I think the mei quin will go for an Asian flavored slaw. The **tarragon** inspires me to resurrect and update an old favorite of mine—cube some chicken breast, then brown it in a pan in butter and remove, then sauté sliced mushrooms with a dry white wine like fumé blanc (It used to be sherry.). Add a large quantity of minced shallot, sauté until aromatic, add in the chicken, flambé with cognac and then add tarragon. Add stock, reduce, and then add cream and cook until done. It used to be straight cream, and loads of it, but I like this updated version with stock for dinner this weekend. Remember, with the **tarragon**, if you want to add complexity to a dish and ramp up the licorice/fennel flavor, add some fennel seeds or fennel seed powder to the dish. This is what I refer to as “compounding” flavors—layering different ingredients that share some similar elements of a particular flavor into a dish to add depth. The **strawberries**, although I keep saying I’ll make ice-cream or strawberry-rhubarb cobbler, keep disappearing by the time I unload the CSA box and get it put away.

**Tarragon Vinaigrette**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1/3 cup white balsamic vinegar	1 garlic clove, peeled
2 minced shallots	1 TBS Dijon style mustard
1-2 TBS of tarragon, chopped	salt and pepper to taste
Sugar (you might need this to balance the flavor)	1 cup of oil

Rub the dressing bowl with the garlic clove vigorously so you can see the garlic “oils” on the inside of the bowl. Put the vinegar in the bowl, then add the shallots and allow to sit for 10 minutes while the flavors meld. Add the mustard and stir with a whisk to combine. Add the tarragon and season with salt and pepper. Slowly, whisk in the oil in a slow steady stream to emulsify it. When all the oil is done and the dressing is thick, taste it and see if it needs sweetening for balance. If so, add a little sugar and taste after whisking each addition in.

If you wish, add all the ingredients but the oil into a blender and puree, then stream in the oil with the motor running. This will yield a stronger tarragon flavor, and will be darker in color and will not last as long, but it sure is quick.

*Chef’s Notes and Tips:* Use this dressing on beets, for cold chicken salad, on grilled salmon or shrimp. Excellent for mixed salad that has diced vegetables such as carrot, celery, and the like. Try using red or white wine vinegar; use a sweet-hot mustard or a coarse mustard.

<p><b>Cooking Demos – Williams Sonoma, Los Gatos</b>          Thursday, August 25th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, \$10          Saturday, September 10th from 10 to 12 pm, \$10          Cooking classes on using what comes in the CSA box to create healthy and tasty recipes. Sign up at <a href="http://www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/">www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/</a>.</p>
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**Pan Fired Padron Peppers**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Based on traditional recipes, this method gives the outside some nice blistering and adds a nice flavor. Do it over a wood fire and it gets even better. Try using a smoked salt for that wood-fired flavor if you don’t have want to fire up a grill.

As many Padron peppers as you wish	Olive oil as needed
Salt to taste—use a coarse crystal salt with a “softer” flavor such as Maldon, Murray River, or Diamond Crystal kosher	

Heat a large heavy skillet, cast iron or steel works well, over medium-high heat. While the pan heats up, put the peppers in a bowl and toss with a just enough olive oil to very lightly coat them. If you have an atomizer for oil, I feel this works best. When the pan is hot, add enough peppers to the pan to cover the pan bottom in one layer with a little space between the peppers. You want the peppers to char, not steam.

Cook the peppers, shaking the pan or stirring to move the peppers so they cook all over. Cook, blistering and charring the skin a bit until the peppers are no longer raw, but not cooked until totally limp. Remove the peppers to a platter and sprinkle with the salt. They peppers are ready to serve. If serving more, eat some of these while cooking off the others.

**Braise of Chantenay Carrots and Bintje Potatoes**, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1-1½ pounds Chantenay carrots, peeled (1 bunch)	1 medium brown onion, peeled and cut into medium dice
1 stalk celery, cut into medium dice	1 pound Bintje potatoes, cut into 1 x 1½ inch chunks
1-2 cloves garlic, minced	1 TBS fresh chopped herbs—tarragon, or thyme and marjoram, or oregano and thyme, or sage and cumin
Salt and pepper to taste	Oil as needed
-Optional- ¼ cup white wine	1 cup vegetable stock, or water as needed

Halve the carrots lengthwise, then cut into 1½ inch long pieces. Heat a 10 inch sauté pan over medium high heat, and when hot film the pan bottom with oil. When the oil is hot, add the carrots and cook to brown them. Caramelize a little, and then use a slotted spoon to transfer the carrots to a bowl, leaving the oil behind. Add the onions and celery into the pan and cook until softened. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Add the carrots into the pan and toss to mix with the base. Add the potatoes and nestle them in. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle in the herbs or your choice.

Add the wine if using and turn up the heat so it simmers vigorously. Cook to reduce by about 80%. Add stock and use water if needed to bring the level of liquid to around 3/4s of the way up the vegetables. Bring the liquid to a vigorous simmer, and then lower the heat to a gentle simmer. Cook until the potatoes are tender. This should take around 20-25 minutes. If the liquid runs too low, add some to keep the vegetables from scorching.

The dish is ready to serve when the potatoes are tender. If there is a lot of liquid left in the pan, remove the vegetables to a serving dish and turn up the heat and boil the liquid to reduce down to the desired consistency, then pour over the vegetables.