



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

September 7th and 8th 2011

A Tangle of Squash, from Steve

Nobody will ever accuse me of being the world's most organized farmer. There was a time, however, when I used to make stakes to mark where each variety of winter squash began and ended in the field at planting time. I can also remember once having made a map of the squash field. This year I did neither.

Winter squash is one of the few crops that we still plant by hand. Using a broad hoe, one person makes holes one pace apart, a second person drops 3-4 seeds in the hole, and a third person uses another hoe to cover the seeds an inch or so deep. Working together this way, we can plant about two acres in a day. This year we planted a fairly large block, by our standards, here at our home farm and another large block at the Redman House field. On planting day, I was preoccupied with a broken rotovator/bedshaper implement that I was trying to put back together. I started the crew out with three different varieties and gave them instructions to plant until they are out of seeds and then start with the next variety. When they were done with those, I gave them several more, and so on.

By the end of July we ended up with a sweet scented sea of intermingled vines in full bloom. It was impossible to tell where one variety ended, and the next began. Two weeks ago we cut off the water, and the vines have begun to dry down. Last week I waded out into the patch for the first time and was pleased by what I saw. Despite the cool, foggy summer that we have had so far, most of the varieties did well. The orange, grey, and green Kabocha varieties all look great. Being disorganized can sometimes make life interesting. I felt like a kid on an Easter-egg hunt. A couple of varieties (Long-Island cheese and Marina Di Chioggia) I had forgotten about entirely.

Veggie Notes

You will notice that the Chanteney carrots are considerably larger this week than when we last harvested them for you two weeks ago. Larger, and sweeter. Contrary to popular belief, most carrot varieties actually get sweeter as they mature. The peeled "baby" carrots available in most grocery stores are actually made from long, skinny, mature Imperator carrots that are cut into small sections and ground down.

Cousa squash are one of our favorite summer squash varieties. Also called a middle eastern zucchini, they have a lovely, almost nutty flavor. They are incredible sliced into slabs about 1/2 inch thick, brushed or tossed with olive oil, salt and pepper, and grilled.

Renew Now For Fall

If you are paying on our 9-week schedule, it's time to renew for the fall session (September 21st/22nd –November 16th/17th). \$198 for vegetables/fruits only, \$270 for vegetables/fruits plus flowers. Please send checks to High Ground Organics at the address below. Contact Chrissi with any questions: (831)254-4918. Thank you!

We are delighted to be getting these dry-farmed early girl tomatoes from Dirty Girl farm. (It has been a difficult season for tomatoes; the unusually cool weather makes them more susceptible to blight. Some farmers we know gave up and ploughed in whole crops of tomatoes.) But these Early Girls are as good as they come. They have that intense, sweet/tart flavor that only a true dry-farmed tomato can have. We've been enjoying them in simple tomato salads with onions and basil.

It seems like fall already, but some of the more "summery" vegetables are still maturing. You can still expect to see eggplant, bell peppers, shelling beans, more padron peppers and tomatoes, and other 'summer' vegetables as we head into September.

Notes from Chef Andrew

I find **cauliflower** to be one of the most overlooked vegetables in the pantry, and I feel that is because it is so often overcooked. Roasting can yield a variety of textures, from soft to crisp to chewy. Roast slices of **cauliflower** and then sauté and puree the trimmings with some **potato** to make a sauce for the slices. The key, as with most cruciferous vegetables, is to avoid overcooking. This week I will make **curried cauliflower with tomatoes**. If I am pressed for time and I get orange cauliflower, I may just roast it with orange juice and garlic as the kids love the color as well as the taste. **Celery** will find its way into all sorts of things--lunches, soup, pasta sauce, or maybe as a sautéed dish on its own. **Tomatoes** will go into the curried cauliflower, sandwiches, or pasta sauce. Dicing the **Cousa** and sautéing it crisp then tossing with tomatoes is great for mixing in with pasta or whole grains. The family is happy with the **filet beans** blanched and then tossed with chopped almonds cooked in butter until the butter lightly browns-known as "beurre noisette" in French. The beans would be good blanched and then tossed with dice **tomato** and garlic also. I like **chard** as a "go to" vegetable when I am in a hurry. When I get the box home, I trim the stem ends, and take the stems off the leaves, wrapping them in a paper or fine cloth towel. I then stack the leaves and roll them up, then wrap them in a paper towel or fine cloth as well. Bag these together

This Week

Celery

Green Filet Beans

Cheddar OR White Cauliflower

Green OR Gold Swiss Chard

Cousa Squash (Wed) OR Early Girl Tomatoes* (Thur)

Carola or Desiree Potatoes

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

Upcoming Events

CSA Cooking Demo: Saturday, September 10th from 10-12 and Thursday, September 22nd, \$10, at Williams Sonoma, Los Gatos. Sign up at www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/.

High Ground Fall Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch: Saturday, October 8th from 10 AM to 4 PM. --pumpkins and gourds, hayrides, pony and horse rides, farm crafts, music, and great food!

and store in the refrigerator until needed. If you are in a hurry, just chop the stems and wash them while the pan heats up. While they cook, slice the leaves and wash them. When the garlic and onion you added to the stems is soft, add the leaves, toss a couple times, and you have a vegetable for dinner. This is also the base for cooking a chard gratin or making a frittata with chard. The **Chantenay carrots** will roast nicely with the potatoes, or may get grated and cooked like hash browns. If I have Carola **potatoes**, I will reproduce Spanish inflected roast potatoes I did a couple weeks back.

How to Peel and Seed Tomatoes, and Make “Filets” of Tomato, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

To Peel: Bring a saucepan of water to a boil. Use a thin sharp knife to cut an “X” at the bottom of the tomato. Do not cut into the flesh, just slice the skin if possible. Use a knife and cut out the core at the top. Or not. (There are handy little tools that look like toothed melon ballers that actually work surprisingly well for this.) There are different schools of thought on this. I frequently find the skin is easier to remove when this is cut out, but not always. Once the water is boiling, carefully put the tomatoes into the water. Cook for 15 seconds or so, then remove them. Keep the water going in case you need to dunk the tomatoes again. Give the tomatoes a quick rinse in cold water to stop the cooking, and using a small knife, peel the skin off starting at the slits you made on the bottom. If the skin still seems very tightly attached, put the tomatoes back in the boiling water for a few seconds and repeat as above. Depending on the tomato, blanching time will vary. I think the skins differ from one type to another, plus I feel ripeness will affect how the skin adheres as well.

To Seed: Seeding a tomato is as simple as slicing the tomato in half through the equator and shaking it, cut side down, over something to catch the mess, be it a sink or bowl. If the seeds are being obstinate, use a finger tip, chopstick end, or some such to loosen the seeds and remove them. If you are going to chop the tomatoes up and cook them down, just squeeze them when you shake them out. Sometimes I want the liquid from the tomatoes for something (like adding flavor to a dressing for a salad with tomatoes or a sauce), so I make sure to seed the tomatoes over a strainer.

Tomato “Filets”: Tomato “filets” are pieces of tomato that are just the flesh of the outer wall of the tomato. To accomplish this, cut the core from the tomato top, and then use a sharp knife to cut into the flesh at the top about a ¼ to ½ inch in, and cut downward, following the curve of the tomato, paring away a portion of the flesh without the softer inner parts and seeds. If necessary, use the knife to clean up the inside surface of the slice. Once trimmed away from the fruit, the slices may then be cleaned up or cut into various shapes

for other uses. Use the centers for making sauces or puree and use for making tomato water.

Curried Cauliflower with Tomatoes, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 med or 2 small cauliflower, trimmed and broken into florets	1 medium onion, peeled and cut into medium dice
2 tomatoes, peeled and seeded, diced fine	1 TBS of garam masala (“curry” powder)
1 inch of ginger, peeled and grated finely	1-2 cloves garlic, minced
Grapeseed oil (or other neutral flavored oil) as needed	Salt and pepper to taste
OPTIONAL-¼ tsp. cayenne, if you like it spicy	OPTIONAL- 2 shallots, sliced into 1/8th inch rings and separated

In a 10 inch sauteuse (straight-sided pan) that has a lid, heat just enough oil to coat the bottom of the pan until hot. Add a pinch of garam masala and stir until fragrant. Add the florets and toss to coat with oil and spices. Sauté, tossing occasionally, until florets are spotted and browning. Remove florets from pan and reserve. Add more oil to the pan and get it hot, and then add ½ the garam masala and stir it in. Add the onions and cook until soft. Add garlic and cook until fragrant and softened. If you like some heat, add the cayenne now, stirring it in to spread it out. Allow the cayenne to get fragrant. Squeeze the ginger over the pan, extracting the juice, then discard the pulp. Add the tomatoes and toss to mix. Sauté one minute, stirring to break them down. Season with salt and pepper. Add the cauliflower, sprinkle with the remaining garam masala, and toss to mix in. Reduce heat to very low, cover, and gently without stirring. Check after 10 minutes. Cook until the cauliflower is tender-it should be easily pierced by a sharp knife, but not mushy or crumbling. Once the cauliflower is tender, the dish is ready to be served. If there is a lot of tomato or it is very thin, remove the florets to a serving dish and turn up the heat, and reduce the tomato to a thicker consistency, or even to a syrup. Pour over the florets.

If you wish to use the shallots garnish; while the cauliflower is cooking, heat ¼-½ inch of oil in a very small pot over medium heat. When the oil surface starts to shiver, add the shallots carefully. Cook, stirring a bit, until the shallots are no longer sizzling/bubbling and they are golden. Remove from the oil, drain, and place on paper bags or paper towelling to dry. The shallots will firm up and get crisp as they cool a bit. Salt lightly and store airtight if you intend to do these early in the day. Use these to top the cauliflower dish before service.

Chef’s Tips and Notes: For a more substantial dish, you can add garbanzo beans. Use 1 can of low sodium garbanzo beans, and rinse them very well. Add them after the onions have cooked down, before the tomatoes. Taste one before cooking, and decide if they are very tender-some are much more so than others. If the beans seem like they are in need of some further cooking, add a couple ounces of water to the pan and cover, cooking the beans until they are softer. Be sure to monitor the liquid in the pan so nothing scorches. Once the beans are tender, proceed with cooking the dish as above.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. Dry-Farmed Early Girl Tomatoes are from Dirty Girl Farm. All other veggies and fruits were grown by High Ground Organics. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.