



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2011

## How Farming Is Like Raising Children,

from Jeanne

For the past 14 years, we have been both farming and raising children. I've come to the conclusion that these two endeavors have a lot in common. Here are some of my basic tenets of farm-rearing.

*Just when you think you have something figured out and under control, it all changes.* I listen patiently while Steve expresses strongly a conclusion he has reached about growing a certain vegetable. It is the absolute opposite of the conclusion he strongly expressed about that exact thing a few months before.

*You give it everything you've got, and it still wants more attention.* The work of farm-raising is never done, and we live with our work all the time. Steve's one day off per week evaporates during the summer, and we just can't manage to get it back. Each year we try to figure out a solution to this during the slower winter months, but once the season gets going, family time and free time too often become casualties of the farm.

*You do your best to raise wonderful fruits and vegetables, and still they will manage to embarrass you in public.* I beam as a farmers' market customer glowingly praises the strawberries he has just bought from me. He takes a bite out of a large scrumptious-looking berry and finds a live earwig inside.

*It helps to have a healthy interest in insects.* Sure, some creepy crawlies still make us a little queasy. But as any kid could tell you, bugs are fascinating creatures if you watch them closely enough. We may as well learn to appreciate them, because they are an important part of the farm biosystem.

*It is hard to entrust the care of your farm to anyone else.* We are lucky to have several wonderful farm helpers so that we can take an occasional vacation. Still, it sometimes seems to take weeks to get back on track when we come home.

*Every farm is an individual, with individual qualities, needs, and reactions.* With our new property on Lewis Road, we are once again in the position of applying what we know to a new "child." We learn that the things that worked for the first and second pieces of farmland don't necessarily work for the third. As much as we try to do our research and apply the "right" methods to suit this farm's particular needs, it still seems that a lot of what we learn is by trial and error.

*Year after year, your farm teaches you new things; it develops its personality as it changes and adapts to your care.*

## New Session Starts Next Week

If you are paying on our 9-week schedule, it's time to renew for the fall session (September 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> –November 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>). \$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 or to pay by credit card: (831)254-4918. Thank you!

After 11 years with us, our home farm is maturing into a responsible, more predictable, entity. It still throws us for a loop now and then, but Steve has learned to work with its different soil types, slopes, and weed seed banks on all the different parts of the farm. The Redman House land was always more uniform, fertile, and flat, and over the past several years has shown itself to be a good place to try new things and take part in UC Extension research projects. Lewis Road is still in a younger stage as we develop infrastructure and crop plans to prevent erosion and maximize nutrient retention. We are still learning a lot from this property, and it did throw some tantrums this year in the form of unexpected pests in the soil. It has required a lot of extra time this year, but we're sure the efforts will pay off in the long run.

*Sometimes the farm is not picture perfect.* Like children who are regressing before a major developmental breakthrough, the farm can sometimes look like a mess. Fortunately, the farm landscape changes weekly (sometimes to the disappointment of the children, who find cover crop "nests" or favorite foraging crops mowed down.)

*There will always be things that are out of your control.* Growing vegetables are constantly subject to pressures from the outside world—weeds, insects, diseases,

changes in weather. We do our best to protect and nurture them so that they can be strong enough to handle what the environment throws at them.

*Mistakes are a wonderful opportunity to learn.* Often we need to revise our expectations of a given crop, or even completely change our strategies. But it's best to look on every failure as a new opportunity to do better in the future.

(This article was revised from one written originally in 2003.)

## This Week

Heirloom Tomatoes\*

Red or Green Butter Lettuce

Padron Peppers

Jonagold, Gala, or RubINETTE  
Apples

White Cauliflower

Basil

Filet Beans (Wed)

Cousa Squash (Thurs)

**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet**

## Veggie Notes

Storing **basil** (Andrew Cohen's method): roll the bunches in paper towelling after taking off the twist-tie, and then store a loose plastic bag in the fridge. If you are new to **padron** peppers, note that most of the time they have no spiciness at

all, but once in a while you get a hot one! When we're not barbecuing, we like to just quickly cook them whole in a little oil in a pan stirring frequently, until they are a little browned on at least a couple sides. Sprinkle with salt, then grab one by the stem and eat it whole. They are quite a treat.

## Upcoming Events

**CSA Cooking Demo:** Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6:30-8:00, \$10, at Williams Sonoma, Los Gatos. Sign up at [www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/](http://www.jonisare.com/cooking-outside-the-box/).

**Fall Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch:** Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 4 PM. --pumpkins and gourds, hayrides, pony and horse rides, farm crafts, live music, great food, and more! \$10/adults, \$5/children, 3 & under free.

## Notes from Chef Andrew

This is a time of year I love when it comes to food. It is starting to feel like fall, but summer days are still in evidence. That means I get to eat the best of both seasons! Grilling, salads, and light pasta dishes still work, but I find myself thinking of braised dishes as well. This box will certainly work for any of these. Salade Nicoise, although a “classic” dish, is also one of the most argued over as to contents. Suffice to say this box is a good starting point. **Lettuce, filet beans,** and the **tomatoes** are all part of a Nicoise, and then you add some olives, hard-boiled egg, red peppers, boiled potatoes (or not!), capers, and tuna. Canned oiled packed is traditional, but you could go modern and sear some sashimi grade tuna and slice it over the salad. A simple vinaigrette goes over the top. You could also shred some **basil**, although this is another contentious point with this recipe. It is good, though. **Apples** are always welcome here, and they are great sautéed as a side, a topping, or a breakfast dish. **Apples** are nice worked into salads as well, or could be diced and sautéed with **cauliflower**. Blanch florets, then sauté with garlic and diced apple and a little apple juice until florets are caramelized. I also like **cauliflower** sliced into thin (1/4 inch) slabs and then caramelized in a hot pan and sauced with a puree of golden raisins soaked in sweet white wine, capers, a little garlic, and olive oil. Try scattering chopped almonds on before serving. I have been experimenting with salads made with raw **Cousa squash**-use a mandolin to slice 1/8th to 3/16th inch thin, and then lightly salt them for 20 minutes or until tender. Rinse, and pile over **lettuce, tomato,** and **basil** and dress with a light dressing that has a little sweetness to it. Another iteration involves cutting the slices into 2 inch pieces and tossing with mint and a little shredded **lettuce** and dressing. I am excited that my daughter has started eating **tomatoes** after a trip to farmers market where we discussed the fact that tomatoes are fruit, and can be quite sweet. Now she wants to try all the ones I get, and see if she can pick out the sweet ones. One of the tricks to this is to use your nose. Smell the stem end, and if it smells sweet, chances are good the tomato will be as well. I think I will grill the **padrons** and an onion, and chop the lot up and dress with sherry vinegar and fruity Spanish olive and use it to top a grilled steak or piece of fish. Speaking of fish, the **tomatoes** are great to make a salad of, and top seared fish with.

## A Small Tomato Salad, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This dish got its name when my wife would ask what's for dinner and I'd say, “Seared fish with a small tomato salad”. Not small because I use small tomatoes, but because I never made that much of it. This salad depends entirely on the tomatoes, so use the best. I like to use several different types of heirloom tomatoes for the different colors and flavors they bring to the plate. This is the basic salad that I use to top seared fish.

2-3 cups heirloom tomatoes, seeded and cut into ½ inch dice	1 TBS tiny fresh marjoram (or oregano) leaves, plucked from the ends of the stems
Salt and pepper	1-2 TBS of a light vinegar, such as champagne, rosé, white balsamic, or sherry
1-2 TBS Extra Virgin olive oil, or as needed	

Place the tomato into a non-reactive bowl. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper, then drizzle with vinegar. Toss gently to mix. Add some of the herbs, and gently toss to mix in. Drizzle with oil, and stir to coat the tomato with oil. Allow to marinate up to 1 hour, tossing occasionally.

Just before service, add the rest of the herbs and toss, the tip the tomato salad into a basket strainer just large enough to hold the ingredients, and drain. Anoint with a little more olive oil if you wish after you have drained the salad.

## Quick Cooked Fresh Tomato Sauce for Spaghetti, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

This is a simple cooked tomato “sauce” that is quick to make and extols the virtues of great tomatoes. Use on pasta or top grilled polenta with it. You could use it on bruschetta as well.

1 pound, around 4-6, tomatoes, seeded and cut into ½ inch dice	1 small brown onion, peeled and cut into ¼ inch dice
2 cloves garlic, peeled, de-germed, and minced	10 basil leaves, finely sliced
Salt and pepper to taste	Olive oil as needed
Parmesan cheese as wanted	

Heat a pan over medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, add enough oil to lightly film the bottom. When the oil is hot, but not smoking, add the onions, tossing to coat them. Sauté until translucent and softened, but not coloring. Add the garlic and cook until softened and fragrant.

Add the tomatoes, and drizzle with 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil, and toss to heat. Add the basil and season with salt and pepper, tossing to mix in. Add cooked pasta, toss to mix all, and serve. Pass the cheese.

*Chef's Notes and Tips:* If the “sauce” seems dry, save a little pasta water (1/4 –1/2 cup) to add into the sauce with the pasta. 1-2 tablespoons capers would work well in this dish, and you could certainly add olives to this dish. I'd use black olives with this dish I think, as they tend to be a little fruitier tasting I think. With or without the pits, brined or oil cured, any would work. For a more refined dish, or if your tomatoes have a tough skin, peel the tomatoes before dicing.

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