



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011

## Production Update, from Steve

Summer at last! After an especially cold and foggy summer, here it is the second half of September and we are enjoying by far the nicest weather of the year. The eggplant, beans, peppers, basil, and squash are all loving it. So, you'll be seeing more kinds of beans and peppers, basil, summer squash and eggplant soon. Tomatoes are also finally getting a break from the blight-inducing cool weather. This is the time of year when everything is at its best. The lettuces, greens, carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, herbs, and squashes have had benefit of warm sun without too much heat and they are really good right now. The apple varieties are coming in one by one, and we've picked our first crop of pears, which need some time in the cooler before they'll be ready to eat. We've started harvesting the winter squashes, which will also need a few weeks' storage to sweeten up.

While all the late summer crops are growing nicely, last week we finished seeding the last of our transplant trays in the greenhouse. These are mostly varieties of broccoli, cauliflower, fennel, and cabbage for overwinter production. We are also filling the greenhouse with flats of yellow, red, and cipollini onions that will be transplanted out in November. After all of these transplants are out in the field, the greenhouse will sit empty for a month or so before the cycle starts all over again when we start with next year's plants in December.

We also had the beds for next year's strawberry crop listed up last week. I pride myself on the fact that almost all of the production operations--from growing transplants to doing all the ground preparation, and listing beds--we do ourselves. The one exception is listing strawberry beds. Because the company we hire has tractors that are much more powerful than ours, they are able to make taller, straighter beds. It is an impressive sight to watch. After the operator sets way-points at the beginning and end of the first row, the GPS guidance system takes over and the result is a field with perfectly straight beds. I have high hopes for next year's berry crop. Never have we done a better job of preparing the ground ahead of time. We made two passes with the "ripper," an implement that breaks up deep compaction. We leveled the whole field so that it will drain evenly during the winter storms. And, we spread over 25 tons of compost and a ton of gypsum. Getting the field ready early gives us great piece of mind, because early fall storms can easily sabotage a strawberry planting if we can't get into the field to work it before it's time to plant the berries in October.

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## Fall Harvest Festival and Pumpkin Patch

Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 4 PM.

Come celebrate the fall harvest season with pumpkins and gourds, hayrides, pony and horse rides, farm crafts, live music, great food, cooking demonstrations, and more! \$10/adults, \$5/children, 3 & under free. Location: High Ground Organics, 521 Harkins Slough Rd., Watsonville.

## This Week

Mustard greens

Chioggia beets

Chantenay carrots

Purple plum radishes

Cilantro OR Italian parsley

Romaine lettuce

Green Butter OR Red Leaf lettuce

Cousa Squash (Wed)

Desiree or Romanze Potatoes (Thurs)

Early Girl or Cherry Tomatoes\* (Wed)

Padron Peppers (Thurs)

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet

## Veggie Notes

**Cousa squash** are also known as middle eastern zucchini and can be prepared in the same ways as the more familiar zucchini. We particularly like to cut the couosas into slabs, brush with olive oil, salt and pepper, and grill or broil them.

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! 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.

*Padron Pepper Apology:* Wasn't I surprised when I cooked up my padrons last week and found every last one fiery hot! (If this happened to you too let Chrissi know and we can credit you.) This week's padrons should not be spicy like that;

we've tested them out.

*Storage notes:* Store everything in the fridge except the tomatoes and potatoes, if you get them. **Mustard greens** like to be kept in the coldest part of the refrigerator, and like a little damp. Wrap them in paper towelling and then loosely in a plastic bag. Don't seal the bag tightly or you wind up with that nasty broccoli smell from the sulfur compounds present in cruciferous vegetables. Also, keep away from things that continue to ripen and outgas ethylene--apples, bananas, avocados, etc--as this robs chlorophyll from the greens and speeds yellowing and deterioration. Now I know why sometimes my greens lasted forever, and sometimes got funky in a couple days. It was the avocados' fault! -- Andrew C.

## Notes from Chef Andrew

**Mustard greens** are one of those things many Americans shy away from. In part, that is probably due to the bitter quality these greens can have, but also I think it is because mustard greens can be prepared so many ways it is confusing. You can eat them raw in salad--slice finely and use a little bit to enliven a salad. You can semi-cook or wilt them--simply add them to things like grains, pasta, or beans and let the heat from the dish cook them. You can also use a hot dressing on them as you would a wilted spinach salad, except I find the mustard far more interesting. You can also use them as wrappers--just dunk in boiling water and then rinse with cold water. This will give bright color and flavor, leaving the sharpness, if present, mostly intact. You can quick cook the greens--flash sauté them with oil and garlic, or you can dunk them in boiling water and then sauté them. This leaves a little of the heat, and renders the greens succulent. Last, but not least--the classic Southern method--long and slow. This gives a murky colored dish that tends to wipe out the heat, but brings out some bitterness. It also gives the dish a deep flavor that only long cooking develops in things like kale, collards, and mustard greens. I find cooking the greens with fat is a winning combination, and they do seem to really go well with pork fat. I especially like a little bacon, ham, or prosciutto diced up for flavor. Pimenton de la Vera Dulce (Sweet smoked Spanish paprika) goes really well also, especially in lieu of pork fat.

**Purple plum radishes** can be used as regular table radishes would be, but I will try sautéing them, either in slices or in chunks. I will make a "quickle" with them as well and use as a salad with some soft **lettuce**. The Cool **Cilantro** Dressing that goes with the salad can also be used on the **Cousa squash** or the **potatoes** that will be in the boxes. Grill the squash and drizzle with lemon juice, and then hit with the dressing, and for the potatoes, halve them and roast with a good lashing of salt, cumin, and paprika, and then drizzle with the dressing for a dish of wonderful contrasts. The **Chioggia** (pronounced key-oh-jyah) **beets** are mild and sweet roasted, but lose the defined bulls-eye pattern when cooked. They are fun used raw, or just blanch enough to lose that raw edge, and I will do this with some **Chantenay carrots** for a salad (recipe below).

### Sauté of Mustard Greens, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch mustard greens, stemmed, washed, and drained	1-2 pieces bacon, cut into ¼ inch batons
1 small onion, peeled and diced	2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
Salt and pepper to taste	2 TBS cider vinegar
2 TBS olive oil, or as needed	

Bring enough water to cover the greens to a boil, then add the greens. Boil 2 minutes, the drain. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out the excess water. If you wish, you can chop the greens into small bits. Heat a sauté pan large enough to hold the greens over medium-low heat. When hot, add the bacon and cook gently until crisp, rendering the fat without burning it. When the bacon is crisp, remove to paper a towel to drain. Add the onion to the bacon fat and toss to coat. If needed, add just enough oil to coat the pan bottom, then cook the onions until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and softened. Add the greens to the pan and toss to mix with the onions and garlic, and coat with the

**CSA Cooking Demo with Joni Sare:** 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/).

oil. Season with salt and pepper. Add the vinegar and toss to coat. Cook to reduce the vinegar, and heat the greens through. Scatter the bacon over the greens and toss to mix. Serve hot.

### Chioggia Beet & Chantenay Carrot Salad, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

3 Chioggia beets, peeled, sliced into 1/8th inch thin horizontally	2 Chantenay carrots, peeled, sliced into 1/8th inch thin horizontally
1 red onion, peeled, halved through the root, then sliced into 1/8th inch half moons	½ head Romaine lettuce, sliced crosswise into ¼ inch strips
½ cup rice vinegar	½ cup sugar
½ cup chopped flat parsley or cilantro	2 cups Cumin vinaigrette (Recipe Follows)
Pepper to taste	Salt as needed

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and salt it heavily. Have two bowls ready with a ½ cup of dressing in each. Blanch the beets in the boiling water just long enough to render them pliable and take away the "raw" edge to them. Remove from the water and drain, then add to one of the bowls of dressing. Repeat this with the carrot slices, putting them into the other bowl. (I suppose you could just put them all into one bowl, but I keep them separated so I can vary the proportions if I want to later.) Cool the vegetables in the dressing in the refrigerator.

Mix the sugar and vinegar in a jar. Shake until no sugar is visible. Lightly salt the onions and leave for 5-10 minutes. The onions should feel a little slippery and pliant. Rinse until the onions no longer feel slippery. Pour the sugar/vinegar solution over the onions and let marinate at least 20 minutes.

When vegetables are marinated and chilled, drain them. Mix carrots and beets, and assemble the salad. Add lettuces to a bowl and lightly dress. Divide among four plates then top with beet/carrot mixture. Scatter onions over the salad, and then the chopped herbs. Season with salt and pepper, and serve.

### Cumin Vinaigrette, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

½ cup rice vinegar, -OR- ¼ cup rice vinegar and ¼ cup lemon juice	1 garlic clove, peeled
2 tsp. ground cumin seed	1 TBS sugar
1-2 TBS honey mustard, to taste	Salt and pepper to taste
1½ cups olive oil	

Rub a large non-reactive bowl with the garlic clove, leaving streaks of garlic oil in the bowl. Discard the garlic clove. Add the vinegar/lemon juice to the bowl, and add the cumin and sugar. Whisk until the sugar goes into suspension. Season with salt and pepper and add the mustard, whisking to mix it in. Slowly, in a thin stream, whisk in the oil until you have a fairly thick dressing. Taste for balance as you go--you might need less or more oil to achieve the proper balance. Adjust flavors as needed.

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