



What's in the box today?

Basil
Cilantro
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Spinach
Summer Squash
Tomatoes



Rare Earth News

In spite of the dry and cool weather our sweet corn looks great. From the looks of the size of the corn this week we probably won't be seeing our first harvest until the end of August, or possibly early September.

It's been the common topic of conversation among all the local area farmers lately. Is it ever going to warm up? Are we ever going to get any decent rain this summer? July is almost gone and we've had a total of one half inch of rain this month. Right now we've been doing a great job maintaining everything. Our daily ritual of weeding, irrigating, and harvesting has paid off so far by keeping everything alive and well. When comparing records from past seasons its easy to see that our crops are a little behind schedule. Below average temperatures and the lack of rain has been a problem. We need to start getting more rain soon, and, it's got to warm up too. Our "Night Shade" plants (peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants) are all still a ways off from the first harvest. Warmer nighttime temperatures are what's needed to get these crops to finish. From past experience with summers like this I've always seen it turn around. Perhaps a warmer fall will make up for the cooler weather we're getting now. Plants that appreciate the cool weather have been doing well. We just re-ordered additional spinach seed as we plan to continue seeding more. Normally by now it's way to warm for planting spinach. Mid-term crops like zucchinis, Kohlrabi, carrots, beets are doing well. It's our long term crops like sweetcorn, and melons which need a lot of heat, that have us concerned and wondering how they'll end up. We'll just have to wait and see. Have a great week!

Steve & Debra Jo

Basil Butter

Kitchen Garden by Renee Shepard & Fran Raboff

1/2 cup butter at room temperature
2 tsp. lemon juice
1 Tbs. chopped fresh parsley
3 Tbs. chopped fresh **basil**
salt and pepper to taste

Cream the butter and beat in the lemon juice, a little at a time. Beat in the parsley and the basil. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in a serving dish or place on waxed papper and roll into a log. Chill overnight. Slice to serve.

Tips From a Well Seasoned Member

Hi, my name is Lori Horbas and as a long-time member of Rare Earth CSA, I have had years to adjust to the rhythm of a weekly delivery of fruit and vegetables. Debra Jo and Steve thought it might be helpful to newer members to share what I do with my box of produce. I am sure there are many, many ideas out there, what follows is just what works for me.

As you are probably now aware, the first few weeks, as the season just gets underway, the boxes are light and fragrant. Full of basil, light and dark leafy greens, and herb plants, those first boxes are quickly followed by strawberries, radishes, peas, beans and more leafy greens. As the season picks up, the boxes become hefty and diverse. With little or no planning, the contents of a box can quickly become overwhelming to incorporate into a weekly household routine. To stretch the contents of the deliveries over time, as well as enjoying them in peak season, I:

Go through the box the night it is delivered and clean the contents for storage during the week.

This gives me the opportunity to become familiar with the contents in my box, and it starts my creative planning for using its contents.

My Thursday routine is to wash all the leafy greens, spin in a salad spinner and group them together in a large plastic (think Rubbermaid or Tupperware) box in the refrigerator. This makes salad lunches for the upcoming week a breeze since all I have to do is cut the greens. I also top and wash the radishes and store them in the greens box. The greens are somewhat moist so prevent the radishes from drying out.

I do wash, devein, and store the kale with my salad greens. To remove the vein, fold the leaf in half stem side out, pinch the stem, and tear the leaf away from it. I prefer to dice the kale tiny and toss into salads, it offers a beautiful contrast in color, and texture adverse people don't seem to notice it. After cleaning, deveining, and spinning kale, I freeze anything that does not look like it will be eaten within a week. Frozen kale (no blanching necessary) is easily added into soups and stews during cold months, partnering especially well with root vegetables.

Since I usually have a lot of basil, which I love, I tend to keep a little out for eating fresh, cooking, or making pesto; the rest I wash, spin dry and freeze in a freezer bag.

I use frozen basil throughout the year, and while its appearance is generally darker than fresh, its taste is still spot on. Frozen basil is amazing, you just quickly take the quantity you need out of the bag and crumble, while frozen onto or into, whatever you are making. The trick is to be quick so it crumbles, as frozen basil thaws quickly.

While many people love raw peas, I prefer mine blanched, which brings out their brilliant green. My veggie steamer does double duty and provides an easy way to get the job done. After just 3-minutes in the boiling water, I sink the peas into a kettle of ice water to stop the cooking process, when cool, I jar the peas in small glass mason jars and store in the fridge and/or freezer.

Partner up seasonal produce.

I have found that sometimes things that grow in the same part of the season make perfect food partnerships. Arugula or spring greens and strawberries make a perfect salad add toasted nuts or feta cheese, dress with equal parts balsamic vinegar and olive oil and you have a meal.

Change the visual presentation.

The first few years of foot long green beans, I steamed them whole and cut them on the plate to eat. Now, I slice them on a diagonal into tiny pieces and sauté them in a pan with olive oil, lemon zest and pepper. After cooked, I add snippets of chives and toss. Visually they are similar to confetti in contrast to the long bean. I have also cut them into long thin strips similar to a 'French bean' style, which makes them soft and loose on the plate. Often times, a change in the visual presentation will get picky eaters to taste something they might not otherwise be inclined to try, and allows us to appreciate a different dimension of our food's beauty.

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Use the newsletter recipes but search out more.

I have loads old food magazines, *Gourmet*, *Cooking Light*, and *Fine Cooking* (to name a few) that I could not bear to part with. My solution for managing them was to divide them into months and fill each drawer of an old dresser with a month, which I labeled on the edge of the drawer for easy identification. Since doing this, I have found I no longer purchase these magazines because each month, when I take out a handful of that particular month's magazines, it is as if I am seeing them for the first time again. The monthly issues tend to feature ingredients that are not only in season, but usually found in our CSA box. Utilizing these recipes allows me to experiment with new tastes, and return to favorite recipes when the foods they contain are in season.

Learn to put up.

Through the years, I have learned a lot about preserving the harvest. Proof in point, yesterday, I put up 36 jars of strawberry jam from strawberries I purchased in addition to those in my CSA box. These berries were at the height of perfection and every single time I open a jar of strawberry jam, I will have to opportunity to recall just that.

Figuring out how to freeze or brine produce is beneficial as well, and there are many good sources for information. All of these methods and more can extend your produce far beyond its peak season.

Good wishes.

Lori



Mercedes Falk a second year veteran work share member prepares to tackle the chore of staking tomatoes.

Crop Progress Report

All crops are in good shape however many of the crops are maturing a little slower than expected from lack of rain and cooler than normal temperatures for this time of year. Here's an update

- Tomatoes (Greenhouse). Tomatoes sizing up. Some are ripening. Approximately one more week for a full delivery.
- Green Beans—Bush beans in the field are in bloom and should start setting pods in another 1 to 2 weeks.
- Carrots and beets will be coming soon, but right now there to difficult to dig u until we get more rain.
- Sweet corn is 24 to 30 inches tall. No tassles or cobs. Long ways off.
- Field tomatoes are starting to form their fruit. It's going to be a good month before they begin ripening for delivery. Cherry tomatoes should be ripening sooner.
- Peppers are progressing slowly. Late season harvest expected.

Here come the Zucchini.



Mediterranean Chopped Salad

-Cooking Light Magazine

- 2 cups chopped **zucchini/summer squash**
- 2 cups chopped red bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped yellow or orange bell pepper
- 1 cup chopped, seeded **tomato**
- 1/3 cup chopped red onion
- ¼ cup minced fresh flat leaf parsley
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. kosher or sea salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- 6 cups chopped romaine lettuce

Combine the first ten ingredients in a large bowl; toss well. Cover and chill up to 1 hour. Arrange 1 cup lettuce on each of 6 small plates; top each serving with 2 cups veggie mixture. Serve immediately.

This can also be the basis for a main dish salad. Simply add garbanzo beans and crumbled feta. Serve with a crusty bread and a chilled white wine. Serves 6

Fresh Spinach and Pasta

This recipe can be altered based on how much spinach or pasta you have on hand. Just eyeball the amounts- it will always turn out delicious.

Fresh, raw **spinach**

Your favorite pasta, fettuccine and linguine work great

Minced garlic, as much or as little as you like

Olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Parmesan cheese

Boil pasta as directed on package. Meanwhile remove stems from spinach and wash. Pile the dried spinach in a large serving bowl. Drizzle olive oil and half of your minced garlic on spinach. When pasta is cooked and drained you can cover the spinach with all the pasta. Sprinkle the remaining minced garlic and more olive oil on pasta. Season with salt and pepper. Gently toss the pasta with the spinach. Serve immediately with grated parmesan cheese.

Penne with Zucchini and Basil



1 1/2 pounds penne or gemelli
 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 1 1/2 pounds small **zucchini**, halved lengthwise and sliced 1/2 inch thick
 Salt and freshly ground pepper
 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
 3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 2 ounces)
 1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp. **basil**

Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking water. Meanwhile, heat 1/4 cup of the olive oil in each of 2 large skillet. Add half of the zucchini to each skillet, season with salt and pepper and cook

over high heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Return the pasta to the pot and add the butter and zucchini along with any olive oil in the skillets. Add 1/2 cup of the reserved pasta cooking water and half of the Parmesan and season with salt and pepper. Cook over moderate heat, stirring, until the liquid is creamy and slightly absorbed, 1 to 2 minutes. Add more of the pasta cooking water if the pasta is dry. Stir in half of the basil and transfer the pasta to a large platter. Sprinkle with the remaining basil and Parmesan and serve immediately.

Spinach Burek

1 medium onion, minced
 non-stick cooking spray
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
 6 eggs
 1/2 to 1 lb. feta cheese, drained and crumbled
 1 lb. fresh **spinach**, stalks trimmed, well washed and drained;
 chopped medium coarse
 melted butter, approx. 2/3 cup
 1 pkg. (1 lb.) filo dough, thawed in fridge

Spray medium non-stick pan with cooking spray. Over medium heat, sweat onions until soft. Add spinach and cover. Cook until spinach is wilted, about 2-3 minutes.. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Drain well, squeezing out excess moisture with a paper towel.

In large mixing bowl, beat eggs until frothy. Add onion/spinach mixture and cheese and combine well.

Unroll filo dough and keep covered with a slightly damp linen towel to prevent edges from drying out. Place two layers of dough in a buttered 13x9" pan, crumbling dough on sides to fit. Brush with melted butter. Add about 1/3 cup filling and spread evenly over dough. Add another two sheets of filo, brush with butter and add more filling. Repeat layering process, ending with filo dough. Brush top with melted butter. Bake in 350 degree oven for 40-45 minutes or until puffed and golden. Burek will settle as it cools. Cool for about 5 minutes. Slice into wedges and enjoy!