



BLUE HOUSE FARM

CSA Newsletter

A Cabbage In Every Pot

July 8, 2011

It would be hard to find a plant family with more edible (and how!) members than the Brassica family (sometimes also called the 'cruciferous' or 'cabbage' family). In this week's box, half of the items are Brassicas; you'll find broccoli, the cauliflower, collards and pac choi; the Brassica family also includes kale, turnips, kohlrabi, brussels sprout and, of course, cabbage. In the case of broccoli and cauliflower, the flower buds are the edible part. With the collards, you eat just the leaves. And with the pac choi you eat the whole whopping plant, crunchy stems and all. What is more interesting is the vastly different tastes and textures that each of these plants have. The pac choi is a little bit spicy, a little bit sweet, and even when cooked keeps a crunch. The collards are totally mild and practically melt when cooked. And I don't even know how to describe the odd, delicious texture of cauliflower compared to that of broccoli, but it is definitely different. Enjoy!

Unfortunately, it is not looking good on the garlic front. Earlier this week we started digging up the garlic to put in the greenhouse for curing and found the situation pretty grim. Normally when we pull the garlic at this time of the year it still has 4-6 green leaves and the harvest process is dry and dusty. After the garlic is pulled from the field it then goes into the greenhouse to complete its drying and cure. In the greenhouse, those 4-6 green leaves dry-out and the cloves develop their papery sheath. This is also the time when garlic develops its complex flavors. This year, however, the garlic plants had no green leaves. They were attacked by a fungus called "Rust," which has become increasingly prevalent on the central coast and is difficult to control organically (you might remember the orange bumps on your green garlic earlier this year, that was the beginning of the rust). And the soil was not dry and dusty at all, but actually quite wet from the inch of rain we received last week. The papery sheath that protects the garlic bulb on the outside was, not surprisingly, doing what "papery" things do when they get wet: become quite fragile and fall apart. I think we will still have some garlic for the CSA, but it will probably be on the small side again.

On more positive note, all of the warm autumn crops being grown at the new inland ranch are doing great. The tomato plants are huge and we are terribly behind on trellising them up. We are just starting

Anticipated Harvest

Bok Choy
Cauliflower
Red Onions
Collard Greens
Broccoli
Red Batavian Lettuce
Butter Lettuce
Marjoram
Strawberries

You can spell it "bok choy" or "pak choi," or just take the easy way out and call it "chinese cabbage;" what's most important about this member of the brassica family is its uniquely beguiling flavor and nutritional prowess. Translated from Cantonese, bok choy means "white vegetable," a name which hints at bok choy's ubiquity in Chinese cuisine. Since at least the 1400s, bok choy has been the most widely cultivated crop in China. Both the leaves and the stalk are edible, and possess a complex flavor that balances sweetness with bitterness, somewhat like celery crossed with cabbage. Bok Choy is richer in Vitamin A and Beta Carotene than any other cabbage, and it is also a potent source of Vitamin C.

to see the first green fruits develop and if this warm weather continues, I expect to have ripe tomatoes in about a month, which is 3-4 weeks ahead of previous years. It is amazing what more sun and less fog can do to a tomato crop! Even the watermelons and cantaloupes are snapping out of their cold spring slumber. The peppers and eggplants are doing the same. They were growing so slow during our cold spring, I was growing concerned; but they are definitely growing now and have a nice, healthy, dark green look. All the crops seem to be making up for lost time.

From the field, Ryan

DON'T FORGET!

The Blue House Farm Strawberry Festival is July 17th from 2 - 6 PM. More info available by clicking the "events" caldenar icon at facebook.com/bluehousefarm



Evelyn arranging flower bouquets

Ginger-Garlic Bok Choy

- 1 Bunch Bok Choy
- 2 Cloves Garlic
- 1 tsp Ginger
- 2 T Water + 1 T White Wine
- Vegetable Oil
- Salt
- Sesame Oil (optional)

Trim off the very bottom of the Bok Choy stem. Mince the garlic and either mince or grate the ginger.

In a cold skillet or wok, add vegetable oil along with garlic and ginger. Turn heat on to medium-high.

When the garlic and ginger have started sizzling and releasing their heavenly perfume, add the bok choy. Toss vigorously for 15 to 30 seconds to ensure all the bok choy is coated by the ginger-garlic infused oil.

Add the water and white wine, stir, and immediately cover. Let cook for 1 minute or until the liquid has mostly cooked away.

Add salt and, if you wish, a drizzle of sesame oil.

Kara Lahana Sarmasi Turkish Stuffed Collards

- 1 Bunch Collard Greens
- 1 C Long Grain Rice
- 1 - 2 Onions
- 3 - 4 Cloves Garlic
- 1/2 C Golden Raisins
- 1 T Ginger
- 1 T Marjoram
- Juice of 2 Lemons
- Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper
- Crushed Red Pepper (optional)

Destem the collards and slice leaves into 2 or 3 piecases, depending on size. Chop the onions, mince the garlic and ginger.

Put some oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and sauté until they turn translucent, then add the garlic and ginger and cook for an additional 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a mixing bowl and allow to cool slightly, then add uncooked rice, raisins, marjoram, the juice of one lemon and a pinch of salt (and red pepper, if using).

Bring a pot of water to a boil, then add the collards and blanch for 3-5 minutes, then immediately drain and run under cold water to stop cooking.

To assemble sarma: lay collard leaf flat. Place about 1 T of onion/rice mix in the center of the wrap...don't add too much, as rice will expand. Fold the sides of the collard toward the center, then gently roll the filled leaf away from you, snugly but not tightly.

Place sarmas seam-side down in one or two wide sauté pans. Combine juice of remaining lemon with 1 cup Olive Oil, then pour over sarmas. Add water until sarmas are covered, then cover pan and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 1 hour, or until rice is tender. Serve warm or cold with yogurt.

Cauliflower Polonaise

- 1 Big or 2 Medium Heads Cauliflower
- 2 - 3 Hardboiled Eggs, Chopped
- 1 - 2 Cloves Garlic
- 1 - 2 T Butter
- 1 - 2 Thick Slices Day Old Bread
- 3 - 4 T Fresh Parsley
- Salt & Pepper

Hardboil and peel the eggs ahead of time. Trim the cauliflower into florets. Mince the garlic. Remove the crust from the bread and either cube it or pulverise it in a food processor.

Bring a pot or skillet of water to a boil, then place cauliflower in steamer basket and cover. Steam for 10 - 15 minutes or until cauliflower is fork tender. Be vigilant! Nobody likes mushy cauliflower.

Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. When butter is fully melted, add garlic and continue to cook gently over medium heat. When the garlic becomes a pale gold, add the cubed/crumbed bread; cook for about 5 minutes, stirring or tossing frequently, until the breadcrumbs are nicely toasted. Remove the entire skillet from the heat.

When the cauliflower is done, add it and the chopped hardboiled eggs to the skillet (off the heat) and toss with the garlic-butter and breadcrumbs. Chop the parsley, and add it to the dish, along with salt and pepper to taste.