



BLUE HOUSE FARM

CSA Newsletter

Fog Get About It

July 14, 2011

I hope to see some of you this Sunday at our Summer Strawberry Festival. One of the unique aspects of being a part of a CSA is having a direct connection with the farm that is producing your food. These festivals provide you an opportunity to deepen that experience. Visiting the farm, seeing the crops growing, meeting the farmers, and maybe even getting your hands dirty lifting potatoes or garlic from the earth, changes the way that you look at food. Of special note this year: the flower field recently burst into color and looks amazing (bring your cameras), the strawberries are abundant for u-picking, the new adjacent field is nearly all planted, and new this year will be a tractor hayride around the fields.

I've never seen the crew needing to wear more raingear than this year. This week the fog was so THICK that it felt like rain. It was actually too wet for me to do any tractor work as the mud was sticking to the tires and making a mess. The plants were heavy with dew and leaning over. Flower petals are damaged from water stains. But... the bunched greens, broccolis, and lettuces have never been fresher! And the weather is supposed to warm throughout the next week

We finally made time last week to start trellising the tomatoes, which was a big job involving pounding wooden stakes every fifteen feet, running twine down the rows, pulling the twine tight so the plants lift off of the ground, and tying off at each stake. It is quite tricky maintaining the correct height of twine so the plants are all contained and keeping the twine tight with one hand while simultaneously making a knot with the other. The crew's laughter and singing combined with a healthy dose of competitive spirit make challenging work look quick and easy.

Last week, we attended the first-ever Pescadero Grown Farmers Market. For many years, local folks (including farmers like myself) were doubtful that such a small town could support a market. But if last week was any indicator of local interest, commitment, and need for access to locally grown, fresh produce, meat, and seafood, then we were mistaken. The turnout for opening day was impressive. In

Anticipated Harvest

Tuscan Kale
Red Beets
Broccoli
Purplette Onions
Romaine Lettuce
Spring Salad Mix
Oregano
Strawberries

Let's talk about Kale. Designated "the most nutritious vegetable in the world" by no less an authority than Wikipedia, the history of this most potent of greens stretches back to Ancient Greece. We grow three different varieties of Kale at Blue House Farm; Green Curly Kale (also called Scots Kale), Red Russian Kale, and my personal favorite, Tuscan Kale.

This king of Kales has many other names - Dino Kale, Lacinato Kale, Blue-Green Kale, Cavolo Nero (Italian for "black cabbage") and more besides - but possesses singular flavor, earthy and smoky with a green sharpness that yields to sweetness with cooking.

Tuscan Kale makes a fantastic chip when baked, and when slow cooked over low heat produces a pot liquor of unsurpassed depth & magnificence.

Kale is rich in Vitamins A, C & K, beta-carotene, lutein, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium and several different anti-cancer compounds.

the last five years, Pescadero has seen a surge in small, organic farms growing for local outlets. I was especially moved by the support our little town showed for us and the other entrepreneurial growers. The market runs from 5-8, every Thursday.

Enjoy the day,
Ryan

July 17th: Spend The Day In Pescadero! Strawberry Fest (& More!)

Don't Forget! Our Annual Strawberry Festival is THIS SUNDAY, July 17th, from 2PM until 6PM and is totally FREE. Come on down and wander the strawberry patch, picking only the sun-warmed berries that call to you. Delight in miles of Strawberry Shortcake. Bring the kids and send them on a hay ride, then browse the wares at the Blue House FarmStand or roll up your sleeves and participate in a special work project (gloves & boots recommended). You can spend the whole day in Pescadero: the annual Barn Sale is being held in town this weekend, and our neighbors Fifth Crow Farm will be holding an open house on Sunday too. Come spend the day in Pescadero and see why we love it so much!



Caldo Verde - Portugese Kale Potato Soup

1 Bunch Tuscan Kale (or any other kale or collards)
2 - 3 Largish Potatoes
1 Onion
2-3 Cloves Garlic
4-5 C Water, Veggie Stock, or Chicken Broth
Salt & Pepper
Olive Oil
1 C Chorizo or Portobello or Tempeh (optional)
Crushed Red Pepper (optional)

Destem & tear or chop the kale. Chop the potatoes, chop the onion & mince the garlic. If using meat/mushroom/protein, fry it first.

Combine the onions, olive oil and a pinch of salt (and red pepper if using) in a heavy-bottomed pot and set over medium-high heat. When the onions become shiny, about 3 - 5 minutes, add the garlic and cook for another minute or two, until garlic is a pale gold. Add the potatoes and stir for 1 -2 minutes to coat thoroughly.

Add the cooking liquid of your choice, several grindings of black pepper and another pinch of salt, and cover. Cook for 5 - 8 minutes or until potatoes are very tender. Using either a potato masher, fork hand blender, lightly mash the potatoes to thicken the soup; how much is depends on whether or not you want large chunks of potato in your soup.

Add the kale and let it simmer for 2 -3 minutes, or until the greens have wilted. Taste and correct seasonings, Serve in warm bowls topped with fried chorizo/portobello/tempeh.

Macerated Oregano Vinaigrette

A Note About Vinaigrettes:

It's hard list specific ingredient amounts when writing a vinaigrette recipe because so much depends on the size of your salad. Try to gauge how much dressing you'll need, then make the vinaigrette in a vessel that's only large enough to hold the amount you'll use that night (mason jars or anything with a screw lid work fabulously).

Handful Fresh Oregano
1 -2 Cloves Garlic
A Spoonful of Honey
3 Parts Olive Oil to
1 Part Wine Vinegar
Salt & Pepper

In the bottom of a cup or jar, place the oregano and garlic cloves. Crush these up with a fork, spoon, or better yet the muddler you use for mojitos. Cover with olive oil and let rest for as long as humanly possible.

Add honey, vinegar, salt and pepper and mix with fork or whisk, or cover with lid & shake till blended.

North African Beets

1 Bunch Beets
1/2 Head Romaine
Zest & Juice of 1 Orange
1/2 tsp Cumin
1/4 tsp Cinnamon
1 -2 Sprigs Fresh Parsley
Olive Oil
Salt & Pepper

In a cup or small bowl, cover the orange zest with about 2 tablespoons olive oil then let rests. The more time this has to mingle, the tastier the dish. If using whole cumin, be sure to lightly toast it before grinding it into a powder with a spice mill or mortar & pestle.

Remove beet greens and place beets in steamer over boiling water. Steam for 20 to 30 minutes, then remove beets from steam and refresh with cold water (hold onto that steaming liquid!).

Peel and slice the beets. Toss the beets with the orange juice, cumin, cinnamon, orange zested olive oil, and a bit of the reserved steaming liquid. Season with salt & pepper, then chill in the refrigerator for anywhere from a couple hours to a couple days.

When ready to eat toss with parsley and serve over romaine leaves.