



WEEK OF MARCH 14TH 2016 #10/52



**Lilac Season**  
 If you blink you may miss our lilacs. We typically have them in flower for just two weeks a year. I must admit they thrill me with their flowers and fragrance. Ten years ago, I went in search of varieties that would flower in California. They are a garden flower that loves the Midwest and East Coast climates. I found a nursery in the San Joaquin valley that had varieties in a limited range of colors.



## A Love of Food and Cooking

It is very upsetting to me when cooking is referred to as drudgery. I understand that I have an unusual passion for food and cooking, but the drudgery concept has been "fed" to us since shortly after WWII to promote a rapidly growing prepared/packaged/chemically laden "food" industry. We now have a few generations of folks who have no idea how to cook, and we are marketed ridiculous products like pre-peeled hard boiled eggs, or my new favorite outrage, the pre-peeled oranges sold by Whole Foods Market. They say cereal sales are on the decline because millennials say cereal is too much work. How has this happened? Nigel and I kind of live a life of the opposite extreme. We enjoy homemade yogurt, I am soaking and cooking beans, and am attempting to bake really good bread with our flour. We make our own mayo, salad dressings, sauerkraut. I even whip cream with a whisk instead of using an electric mixer because I think it tastes better (also I get everyone involved and I love that!). Sometimes I think I am a bit crazy, but over the past few years I have learned to trade some things out. I don't make as many "fancy" meals. I have learned that when we are really busy or too tired for a big dinner, a simple omelette and steamed spinach is amazingly satisfying and delicious! But one can not survive on omelettes alone, so how do you make time to cook a few good meals every week? For some that means planning ahead, knowing what you will eat each day, some cook a lot on the weekend and for me I am learning how to work a little more passive cooking into my repertoire. Beans are a great example, in the morning before leaving for work, you put them in a bowl to soak. When you come home in the evening, drain, rinse, and discard bad beans. Then put them into a pot with water and cook on low, covered and they will be done before you go to bed. The next day you can use some for a soup or in chili or add to pasta, or purée and make a dip like hummus. Often while I am cooking one meal, I can have the next night's starting in a separate pot. When I chop onions and garlic for tonight's dinner, I chop a few extra and throw them into tomorrow's pot. This way chopping and cleaning happens just once. If I use only half a bunch of greens, I will wash the entire bunch and sauté or steam up what I am not using. Those extra cooked greens can be added to soup, or enjoyed with that delicious, simple omelette. Use temperature and time to your advantage. Cook on a lower temp when it is something that allows for that, so you can be free to walk away and work on something else. This is my new favorite trick, low and slow, because I am forever running out the front door to do something, feed the animals, or muck out the stall, quickly move the fence, or hang laundry. There are many great practices that help us work cooking into our busy modern lives. One tip I would encourage all of us to embrace is to ask for help, even if it is just a little bit of help like chopping the onions. Sharing the process of putting delicious food on our tables makes the entire experience better. I always appreciate feedback, so if you have a favorite time saving tip or two, please pass them on! Oh and if you have any tips on how to make the perfect omelette, I would love to hear that as well:) You can always email me at [lorraine@eatwell.com](mailto:lorraine@eatwell.com) or text me at 530-554-3971.

## Pruning Grapes

We wait until the grapes start to grow before we prune them. This has the effect of delaying flowering for a couple of weeks. By doing so, we reduce the risk of frost damaging the blossom.



This year's start of growth caught Jose and I off guard. The way above normal temperatures in February have brought the spring growth a couple of weeks forward. All our grapes are spur pruned. The grapes grow on shoots that we cut back to two buds from the main horizontal branches (laterals). Jose is cutting back last year's

growth to the two buds that we need, this is a spur. We keep them 6" apart on the lateral. In June, we will thin the grapes to the best bunch every 12". Too much fruit and the grape size will be small. Chicken tractors have worked their way between the rows of grapes. This has provided the fertility that the vines will need this year. Table, eating grapes need this and much more water than wine grapes. You have to starve wine varieties to get the best wines. It is the opposite for the seedless eating kind.

## New Herb Garden

Every three or four years many of the herbs we grow, need replanting in a new spot. We have been incorporating them into our permaculture planting over the last year. They use the ground under and between our new tree plantings. This is one of the five varieties of mint that we grow, which we have had fresh stems to pick as bunches for the farmers market. We planted 1/3rd of an acre of many herbs just before the rain started two weeks ago.



## Recipes and Menu Suggestions

Thai Spinach and Tofu with Peanut Sauce

Uses: Spinach, Onion, Garlic, Cilantro

Savoy Cabbage Gratin, Serve with Baked Salmon

Uses: Savoy Cabbage

Pasta with Chicken and Chard, Serve with a Salad

Uses: Chard, Onion, Garlic, Lemon

Green Kale with Apples, Serve with Pork Chops and Roasted Potatoes

Uses: Green Kale and Apples

Garlic Braised Dandelion Greens with White Bean Purée

Uses: Dandelion Greens and Lemon

**All recipes can be found at: [www.eatwell.com](http://www.eatwell.com) under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."**

## Thai Spinach and Tofu with Peanut Sauce

Farmhouse Kitchen, Serves 4

Nigel and I enjoyed this great use of spinach with rice noodles. I prefer this dish with tofu, but you can use chicken instead. If you serve it with something else you can stretch it even further.

For the Sauce:

1 Onion (larger from the share), bottoms sliced thinly, save tops

1 Green Garlic, bottoms finely chopped, save tops

2 TB Toasted Sesame Oil

4 TB Peanut Butter

1 - 2 TB Red Curry Paste, depending on your taste

1 can Coconut Milk

2 TB Soy Sauce or Fish Sauce

1 TB Sugar (optional)

In a sauce pan, heat the oil over medium temp.

Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the peanut butter, fish sauce, and red curry paste. Stir and mix with the onion and garlic. Add the coconut milk and stir well to break down the peanut butter and curry paste. Add the sugar, if you are using it, and mix well. Remove from heat.

For the Spinach and Tofu:

2 TB Vegetable Oil

1 TB Toasted Sesame Oil

Green Garlic Tops, reserved from sauce, chopped

1/2 lb Tofu (or more if you like), cubed

1 bag of well washed Spinach, trim the very bottom tips, chop the stems, but keep the leaves whole

1 TB Cilantro, finely chopped

Green Onion top, finely chopped

Peanuts

Heat the oil in a skillet over medium high. Add the cubed tofu and cook, stirring occasionally, while you are prepping the spinach. As you are chopping the stems add them to the pan with the tofu. Once all the stems are chopped and added, mix well with the tofu, then place the spinach leaves right on top. Using tongs, turn the leaves over in the pan, so that what is on top goes to the bottom. Do this a couple of times, then put a lid on and allow to cook until the spinach is well wilted. We ate this over rice noodles, but it goes just as well with steamed rice. To serve, put the spinach/tofu onto a platter, pour over some of the peanut sauce, then top with chopped onion tops, cilantro, and a good sprinkle of peanuts.

## Pasta with Chard

[allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com) by J Nardrig

1/3 Lb Spaghetti

2 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1 - 2 Stalks Green Garlic, minced

1 bunch Chard, chopped

1 tsp Capers (I would add more, but I love capers!)

Salt and Pepper, to taste

Juice from one Lemon, or to taste

1/4 cup grated Parmesan Cheese, or to taste

Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain well in a colander. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in the garlic, and cook for 1 minute to soften. Add the chard. Cook and stir until the stems of the chard are tender. You can use some of the hot pasta water to help steam the chard in the covered pan. Stir the hot spaghetti into the chard mixture along with the capers. Season to taste with salt, black pepper, and drizzle with lemon juice, if desired. Sprinkle with Parmesan Cheese to serve.

## Garlic Braised Dandelion Greens with White Bean Purée and Crispy Pancetta

Emeril Lagasse

3 cups cooked White Beans

1 cup plus 2 TB Eatwell Farm Chicken Stock

3/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt and freshly ground Black Pepper

3 oz sliced Pancetta, diced

4 large cloves Garlic, thinly sliced

1/4 tsp crushed Red Pepper

1 lb Dandelion Greens, tough ends trimmed, well washed

1/2 tsp Sugar

Chopped Parsley, for serving

Chopped fresh Thyme, for serving

Kosher Salt, for serving

1 Lemon, cut into 6 wedges, for serving

In a food processor, combine the beans, 1/4 cup of the chicken stock and 6 TB of the Olive Oil and process until mostly smooth, stopping to scrape the sides of the bowl as necessary. Season with salt and black pepper to taste and set aside, covered, at room temperature, until ready to serve. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add the pancetta. Cook, stirring occasionally, until crispy and all of the fat has been rendered, 3 to 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to a paper towel lined plate to drain and set aside. Reduce the heat to low and allow the rendered fat to cool

slightly. Add the garlic and crushed red pepper and cook, stirring, until garlic is lightly golden around the edges, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the greens, remaining chicken stock, and cover the pan. Increase the heat to medium-high and cook 1 to 2 minutes, until greens are wilted. Uncover the pan and add the sugar and salt to taste. Stir to thoroughly combine. Cover the pan and continue to cook until the greens are tender, 5 to 10 minutes longer. The greens may be served warm or at room temp. When ready to serve, divide the bean purée evenly among 6 appetizer or entree plates. Divide the greens among the plates, arranging them around the bean purée. Drizzle each plate with 1 TB of the remaining olive oil and a pinch of chopped parsley, a pinch of chopped thyme, and a pinch of kosher salt. Divide the reserved crispy pancetta evenly among the plates and serve with a lemon wedge.

### This Week's Box List

Lettuce

Spinach

Spring Onions

Green Garlic

Cilantro

Green Kale

Savoy Cabbage

Chard

Red Stemmed Dandelion

Lemons (Twin Girls Farm)

Oranges (Twin Girls Farm)

Apples (Hidden Star Orchards)

## Sautéed Kale with Apples

Found on [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com) by Suzanne

1 TB Olive Oil

1 Onion, sliced

2 Apples, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces

2 tsp Apple Cider Vinegar

1/8 tsp Sea Salt\*

1/8 tsp Ground Black Pepper\*

4 cups chopped Kale leaves

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, cook and stir until onions are tender, about 4 minutes. Add apples, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cover skillet and cook until apples are tender, about 3 minutes. Add kale. Cover and cook until kale is tender, 4 to 5 minutes.

\*I think this is probably not enough salt or pepper, so I would definitely taste and adjust.

## Savoy Cabbage Gratin

Sunset Magazine Kate Washington January 2015, Serves 6

About a month ago, I included a recipe for Savoy Cabbage Gratin. When I wrote the newsletter I hadn't tried the recipe, but did make it that week for a potluck. I have to say it was delicious and GONE! Since we have Savoy Cabbage in the share again this week, I highly recommend this recipe. It would go well with pork chops, or baked chicken, or as I suggest above, baked salmon. I know this is a repeat, but REALLY it was that good. I can't wait to make it again!

**Savoy Cabbage Gratin Recipe and All other recipes can be found at: [www.eatwell.com](http://www.eatwell.com) under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."**