



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter July 4-5, 2017

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

This week, we've been looking forward to fall, with some of our major fall crops being planted. The first group was brassicas: cabbage (green and red), cauliflower (white, purple, and Romanesco), and broccoli. The second group, which I seeded yesterday, was the storage carrot planting, our third and final carrot succession of the year.

We time these plantings to have enough growing season to size up sufficiently, but to do so right around the first fall frost, which maximizes sugar development in the produce. The harvested crops will be kept in the cooler through the fall CSA season, and perhaps beyond. With our newly insulated packing shed, we envision someday selling these storage crops right through the winter.

While planting is usually surrounded by optimism—freshly tilled soil, young plants ready to let their roots expand—last week, we discovered the first symptoms of a brassica disease that gives us cause for concern about future brassica crops this season. Black rot, caused by a bacterial pathogen, showed up in some of our brassica plantings late last summer. Last year's wet weather caused black rot to be widespread on most vegetable farms in the region. The disease can be pretty detrimental to the crop, and the pathogen can remain in the soil for years.

We took many precautions this year, including rotating brassica crops to new fields with no history of black rot, sanitizing greenhouse trays, and performing "hot water treatment" of brassica seeds. Since we suspected that the black rot was introduced to the farm by contaminated seed, we hoped this last step would solve the problem. It involves submerging vegetable seeds in hot water of a specific temperature for a specific duration of time, designed to kill any pathogens that may be on the seed while minimizing adverse effect on seed viability.

Despite those efforts, we are now seeing low levels of black rot symptoms in several of our brassica plantings. Dry weather should slow the spread, and we're looking at ways to further minimize the effects of the disease, but it does pose a big challenge. We'll keep you posted on progress.
—Dana

What's in the box?

European cucumber

Green leaf lettuce: This green leaf lettuce is a different variety than what you have received in earlier boxes. It's a heat tolerant variety and has thicker leaves and a more compact growth habit. Great for everything you'd expect — salads, sandwiches, wraps, etc.

Broccoli: Broccoli plantings are going crazy these days, so we're sharing the bounty with you! Try roasting it or adding it to a casserole or quiche.

Purple spring onions: These little onions are mild-flavored and very versatile. The bulbs can be used like a sweet onion—raw in a salad, if you like, or cooked—and the tops can be used like a scallion. Use in this week's recipe.

Bulb fennel: One of the more unusual offerings of our CSA, fennel has a flavor like licorice. Before use, pull off 1-2 bottom layers/leaves and rinse off soil that tends to get in there during growth. Use in this week's recipe. Alternatively, for basic roasted fennel, slice the bulb vertically across the short dimension and remove the core at the base; cut lengthwise into 1/2" thick slices; toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper; and roast at 400°F for an hour (or more, if it is not yet tender), flipping the slices after 30 minutes. Sprinkle with parmesan before serving.

Flat leaf ("Italian") parsley: This nutritious herb is called for in this week's recipe, and can be used in tabbouleh, as a garnish, and in green juices and smoothies.

Fresh garlic: These are freshly dug, uncured garlic bulbs. Because they haven't yet been dried, they don't have the papery skin usually found on garlic. Instead, there's a thicker "peel" around the bulb and around each clove. Store in the refrigerator.

Basil: Make another batch of pesto with this week's garlic, or pair with tomato, salt, and fresh mozzarella for the most satisfying summer snack.

Red, Sun Gold, and/or black cherry tomatoes (rotational): The cherry tomato plants still haven't quite hit their stride, but another group of members is receiving cherry tomatoes this week. The remaining members will get some next week. Not to worry, future boxes will include more substantial volumes of these.

Rhubarb (full shares only): After underwhelming spring performance of this rhubarb—which was planted from root divisions of farm rhubarb left from my grandparents' era—we were surprised to see a resurgence of growth and tender, colorful stalks. Use 'em up in this week's recipe for rhubarb bars.

On Deck

Each week, we'll give some hints about what new items may show up CSA shares in the next 1-2 weeks. Please note, this is not a guarantee, but our attempt to give you an idea of what's coming up.

Zucchini — Green beans — New potatoes

Roast Chicken with Fennel

This recipe calls for two fennel bulbs, so half share members will need to halve the recipe or just accept a different fennel-to-chicken ratio. See item description on front page for additional fennel preparation instructions.

Ingredients:

½ cup extra virgin olive oil, or as needed
2 bulbs fennel, trimmed and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
2-3 purple spring onion bulbs, coarsely chopped
2-3 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 whole (about 3-pound) chicken, cut up, or about 3 pounds drumsticks and thighs
Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish
Lemon wedges

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 450 degrees. Drizzle bottom of shallow roasting pan or baking sheet with about half the olive oil and cover it with a layer of the fennel, onions, and garlic. Drizzle remaining oil over fennel mixture and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cut up chicken if necessary and sprinkle the pieces with salt and pepper.
2. Top fennel with the chicken parts, skin side up. Ideally, you'll have a layer of fennel pretty much covered by a layer of chicken, but it's fine if some of the fennel roasts uncovered. Spoon some of the oil from bottom of pan over chicken. If there is not enough, drizzle additional olive oil over the chicken. Roast about 15 minutes, then baste chicken with pan drippings and rotate the pan. If necessary, adjust oven temperature so chicken browns but does not burn.
3. The chicken will be done in about 30 minutes. Serve each piece with some fennel and a little of the pan juices spooned over, garnished with parsley and a lemon wedge.

Recipe modified from <https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/8500-roast-chicken-with-fennel>

Rhubarb Bars

Another fine recipe from my mom.

Ingredients

For crust:

2 C flour
¾ C powdered sugar
1 C butter

For filling

4 large eggs
1 ½ C sugar
½ C flour
½ tsp salt
4 C thinly sliced rhubarb

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350. Mix together flour and powdered sugar, then cut in the butter. crust ingredients in a 10X15 pan, using a spatula or other flat bottomed kitchen utensil, such as a measuring cup. It's OK for crust to go up the side of the pan. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes.
2. While crust is baking, combine eggs, sugar, flour, and salt. Fold in the sliced rhubarb.
3. Spread egg/rhubarb mixture on hot crust. Bake at 350 for 40-45 minutes or until crust is lightly browned and filling is set. If desired, sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.