

FIELD *notes*

UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
First Harvest: 6/5/12 & 6/8/12



What's in the box?

Salad Mix

Spinach, *Tyee*

Arugula, *Astro*

Choi, *Mei Qing & Prize Choy*

Strawberries, *Albion*

Blueberries, *mixed varieties*

Avocado, *Bacon type*

Lemons, *Meyer*

New! Recipes by Crop

Over the years, many CSA members have asked for the recipes that appear in the *Field Notes* newsletter to be accessible online. These are now available as PDF files on the CASFS website, indexed by crop. Go to:

<http://bit.ly/Recipesbycrop>

*We also invite our CSA members to share a favorite recipe using our farm-fresh produce.
May the feast begin!*

*The artwork in this week's newsletter is provided by
First-Year Apprentice Brenda Quintero*



Ocean view from the farm

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Notes from the Field by *Susie Yeo, First-Year Apprentice*

Welcome to the 2012 CSA season! Like some of you, the first-year apprentices are new to the scene. In mid April, thirty-eight of us moved to Santa Cruz to learn how to grow food using organic and sustainable methods. Though we come from a myriad of places and carry with us a kaleidoscope of experiences, we spend our days almost exclusively with one another, working side by side, sharing questions and insights in class, and weaving a questionably copious amount of eating, playing and dancing in between. The transition has been surprisingly quick. The days are full and busy; sometimes we scramble and falter, not calling, writing, or visiting old friends and family as often as we'd like. Needless to say, life on the farm can feel quite insular. We compare notes and agree – it's a challenge to keep contact with Out There.

With so many new faces, conversations hover around where do you come from, where are you going, where is home – and these conversations make me think about where we are now. They remind me that choosing to farm is to choose a hyperlocal life. Farm work is essentially concerned with the unique characteristics that define a place, and our attention is bound to the patch of land we work. Almost as if it were an antidote to the flush of online virtual spaces that many socialize and work within, the farm is a literal space that we occupy, and for some of us it is refreshing to limit our focus to this literal space. Wendell Berry writes: The most insistent and formidable concern of agriculture, wherever it is taken seriously, is the distinct individuality of every farm, every field on every farm, every farm family, and every creature on every farm (*Berry, _Imagination in Place_, p. 9*).

Then, to farm well, one must learn to pay attention. We are learning to watch the fields with patience and thoughtfulness. The crops sit tiny and neat in their beds. From afar they seem static, almost dumbly obedient. It is only with more careful observation that the nuances and clues to their slow but dynamic shifts emerge. Like the personalities that people our lives, each plant has its own desires and demands. Some may be more difficult and finicky than others, but if we notice and respond to its needs, a plant will thrive. Every day we learn to understand more deeply the subtle language of the crops and the soil in which they grow; it is a new, fun literacy. Orin shared a Chinese proverb that attests to such attentiveness: The best fertilizer is a gardener's shadow.

This kind of careful consideration is not always easy for someone who is accustomed to the broad thrill and screaming chaos of a city, or for someone mildly addicted to the incessant noise and insta-tainment of the digital world, a virtual world. It takes work to slow down and focus, to pay attention and engage. Some mornings I wake up tingling with a restlessness that feels profound, incurable. On these days I'm grateful for the steady repetition of the work in front of me. It anchors me to something tangible and immediate, and somehow I am locked back into my skin. The deep rose glow of dawn disappears into a cool grey work morning, and I think about how I might offer a similar kind of dedication and watchfulness to loved ones though they are scattered so far away Out There.

This first week of CSA share distributions is always a momentous and exciting one. We are excited to meet you and talk vegetables and food. Maybe some of you grow your own food, too, and we will talk together about soil, weather.com, bugs. You will tell me about your home, and I will do my best to tell you what I am learning about mine.



Spinach Strawberry Salad

Serves 4

- Sesame seeds
- 2 T sugar
- 2 T red wine vinegar
- minced garlic to taste
- dry mustard to taste
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup salad oil
- 1 bunch spinach, cleaned
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced
- 1-1/2 teaspoons fresh dill, or 1/2 tsp. dried dill

Toast the sesame seeds in a dry skillet or hot oven for several minutes, tossing often. Let cool. Combine sugar, vinegar and garlic, dry mustard, salt and pepper. Whisk in the oil in a thin stream. Toss with spinach, strawberries, dill and sesame seeds.

*Recipe source: Asparagus to Zucchini,
a Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce*

BOK CHOY comes from the Cantonese word for “white vegetable” and is a variety found in the group Brassica rapa chinensis. It is used widely in Asian cuisine, but its popularity is increasing because of its versatility and winter-hardiness. Bok choy is a highly nutritious green that is related to cabbage, turnip, kale, and broccoli. It’s great cooked or served raw with hummus or any other dip, and can be used as a substitute in recipes for most other cooking greens, especially chard.

Braised Baby Bok Choy

- 1 cup chicken broth (or 1-1/2 T of light miso and water)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3/4 lb. baby bok choy, trimmed
- 1/2 teaspoon Asian sesame oil

Bring broth and butter to a simmer in a deep large heavy skillet. Arrange bok choy evenly in skillet and simmer, covered, until tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer bok choy with tongs to a serving dish and cover to keep warm.

Boil broth mixture until reduced to about 1/4 cup, then stir in sesame oil and pepper to taste. Pour mixture over bok choy.

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Strawberry Orange Shortcake

Serves 6

- 1-1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 big pinch of salt
- 4 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- zest of one organic orange
- 6 T (3/4 of a stick) unsalted butter, chilled
- 11 T heavy cream
- 1 pint heavy whipping cream
- 2 T sugar
- 1 T Grand Marnier (optional)
- 1-2 pints strawberries

Preheat oven to 400°. In a bowl, combine flour, salt, sugar, baking powder and zest. Cut the cold butter into flour mixture with pastry blender until pieces of butter are pea size or smaller. Stir in 10 tablespoons cream until the mixture just comes together. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and roll 1/2-inch thick. Cut into six 2-inch round or square biscuits.

To bake, place biscuits on baking sheet and brush tops with remaining 1 tablespoon of cream. Bake for 17 minutes, until golden.

Slice all but 6 pretty berries and stir in sugar to taste.

Whip cream to soft peaks, adding sugar and Grand Marnier toward the end of whipping.

Split each biscuit and layer with strawberry mixture and whip cream. Top shortcake with more berries, a final spoonful of whipped cream then garnish with a whole berry and a sprig of mint.



Bloom lemon goddess