What’s in the box?

Lettuce, Sylvesta Green Butter
Arugula, Astro
Kale, Red Ursa
Carrots, Nelson
Onions, Bianca di Maggio (cipollini)
Turnips, Scarlet Queen
Basil, Aroma2
Potatoes, Yukon Gold
Strawberries, Albion
Blueberries, mixed varieties

Notes from the Field by Aileen Suzara,
First-Year Apprentice

Farm Fresh Flavors

What does a July in Santa Cruz taste like? I’m finding that out here on the CASFS farm. These past few weeks, it’s been easy to witness the signs of summer. Shiny green peppers are swelling on the stalk. Once-dormant beans are now climbing up the pole. Bees are buzzing in the lavender. And on foggy harvest mornings, apprentices are now busy bringing in fresh, vibrant produce by the armful, box, and the wheelbarrow – from succulent baby bok choi, to moon-round turnips, rainbow chard and red-veined dandelion greens. Simply put, summer is delicious.

Before this apprenticeship, I was cooking by night at a vegetarian Filipino restaurant in Oakland. What kept me returning to the kitchen night after night was a sense of connection between myself, the meals we prepared, and the folks in our community eating just outside the kitchen door. What I missed, though, was a more direct relationship with the cultivation of food, and the land itself. That desire is a part of what brought me here. I’m happy to say I’ve found that and more – the opportunity to take a hand in cultivating (and cooking and eating) food straight from the ground.

Perhaps one of the most challenging (and highly rewarding) “chores” of every CASFS apprentice is to prepare community meals. It’s no small feat to cook three nourishing meals for nearly 50 people. But it is quite possibly one of the more tangible experiences that affirms our place in the food loop. From preparing beds, to planting seeds, irrigating and eventually harvesting produce, there is a sense of completion in cooking and eating it as food. I’ve been blown away by the creativity and sensitivity brought to the kitchen, through the sharing of family recipes and careful preparation. And in every bite, the flavors of the summer and the land shine through.

Read on for some delicious recipes and tips for the produce in this week’s box, from fellow apprentice and farmer-chef Matthew Raiford.

The world begins at the kitchen table. – Joy Harjo
We would like to introduce First-Year apprentice Matthew Raiford, a professional chef and passionate member of the culinary community. He has coined the name CheFarmer as he transitions from a chef to a farmer, obtaining as much knowledge about local and sustainable produce as possible. This week’s recipes are contributed by CheFarmer Raiford.

CheFarmer Raiford was trained in classic French cuisine through the Culinary Institute of America, and has an affinity for Mediterranean flavors. With over 15 years of formal experience in the food and hospitality industry, he has worked and traveled extensively and taught culinary arts in Georgia, Texas and Maryland, preparing dishes from around the world. Most recently, CheFarmer Raiford was the Executive Chef for Haute Catering in Washington, D.C., the premiere catering company for the House of Representatives, Canadian Embassy, Pentagon Conference Center, National Defense University and the National Archives. After the apprenticeship, CheFarmer Raiford will go home to Georgia to restart the once twenty-five acre family farm in Georgia to take his place as a sixth generation farmer.

**Lavender and Strawberry Sorbet**

| 1 C sugar  |
| 1-1/2 cups water  |
| 8 fresh lavender spikes  |
| 8 C strawberries, hulled  |
| 2 egg whites  |

Place the sugar and water in a medium pot on the stove and bring to a boil. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and add lavender and allow to infuse for an hour in the refrigerator.

Puree strawberries in a food processor, then strain puree through a sieve.

Add strawberries to lavender syrup and place into a freezer-proof container. Allow to freeze for 4 hours or until mixture is slushy.

Whisk egg whites until frothy. Add lavender strawberry mixture to food processor, process until smooth. Stir in egg whites, then add to the sorbet until well incorporated. Return sorbet to freezer and allow to freeze.