Notes from the Field by Sara Arredondo, First-Year Apprentice

Harvest morning!

Today I woke up, the fog thick and dewy clinging to my clothes, and gleefully walked down to the packing shed to help coordinate my second CSA harvest ever. Standing around the packing tables with this amazing group of field apprentices, I could feel the excitement and dedication building as we prioritized and volunteered for various crops.

Pfft, pfft, my harvest knife sliced in and out of the arugula stems. Bunching them in my hands, “the left one working with the right,” as our production manager Liz likes to say, I could hear the stillness of the morning speckled with occasional laughter coming from the strawberry patch and rows of kale the next field over.

As I passed my fellow apprentices bringing boxes up and down the rows of vegetables, conversation flowed easily from morning greetings to talk of harvest updates and the greatness of growing food for our local community.

Sitting here in the CSA garden this week and meeting some of the members (you!), I feel such a sense of joy and fulfillment in the connection of Earth, food, and community. And I especially love meeting your amazing children who walk into the herb and flower garden with such delight and wonder.

This afternoon, a former UCSC graduate who is visiting from New Zealand stopped by to “check things out” and see how the gardens have evolved. He asked about the apprenticeship, how the crops are doing, and how I want to share this knowledge when I graduate. We talked about the importance of nature, connecting with place and community, and transitioning towards a more sustainable life. And as he was leaving, he stopped and turned to say, “It’s so great to meet people who are really living this, not just out there talking about it.” Yes, I thought, it really is. And I feel so grateful to be living it.

Kylie with onion bouquets

Upcoming Event
Growing & Arranging Organic Cut Flowers
Saturday, June 30 | 10am-1pm
UCSC Farm

Go seasonal, local and organic with cut flowers! Learn from Zoe Hitchner of Everett Family Farm and Orin Martin, Chadwick Garden Manager, how to select, grow, harvest, handle and arrange cut flowers into beautiful bouquets. Cost $30 general admission, $20 FF&G members and $5 UCSC students.

Bouquets available for sale at the workshop.

Harvest Forecast* for June 26 and 29
Basil           Kohlrabi       Spinach
Chard           Red Beets      Blueberries
Choi            Romaine Lettuce Strawberries
Cilantro (Tues.)

*Harvest may vary for 1 or 2 crops, determined on day of harvest

What’s in the box?
Arugula, Astro
Chard, Rhubarb Red
Cilantro, Santo
Kale, Red Ursa
Kohlrabi, Kolibri
Salad Mix
Spinach, Tyee
Turnips, Hakurei
Blueberries, mixed varieties
Strawberries, Albion

FIELD notes
UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
First Harvest: 6/19/12 & 6/21/12
Chard Tacos

1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, cut into 1/4-inch slices
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon red pepper flakes, or to taste
1/2 cup chicken broth
1 bunch Swiss chard, tough stems removed and leaves cut crosswise into 1-1/2-inch slices
1 pinch salt
12 corn tortillas
1 cup crumbled queso fresco cheese
3/4 cup salsa

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in the onion; cook and stir until onion has softened and turned golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the chicken broth, Swiss chard, and salt. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until chard is nearly tender, about 5 minutes. Remove the lid and increase heat to medium, stirring until the liquid evaporates, about 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat another skillet over medium-high heat. Warm tortillas in skillet for about 1 minute per side. Fill the warmed tortillas with the chard, and top with the queso fresco cheese and salsa.

Source: Allrecipes.com

Smashed Turnips with Fresh Horseradish

The Meatball Shop, Manhattan, NY

8 large turnips (about 2 pounds), peeled and quartered
1/2 cup sour cream
6 scallions, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons freshly grated horseradish, or more to taste
2 teaspoons salt

Place the turnips in a large pot with enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer until fork-tender, about 25 minutes. Drain thoroughly, until completely dry.

Place the turnips in a bowl and, while they are still hot, add the sour cream, scallions, horseradish and salt. Mash with a wire whisk or potato masher until well combined but still chunky. Serve immediately.

well.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/11/14/the-meatball-shop-goes-vegetarian/

Nutrition facts: The turnip is low in saturated fat, and very low in cholesterol. It is also a good source of protein, thiamin, niacin, pantothenic acid and phosphorus, and a very good source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E (alpha tocopherol), vitamin K, riboflavin, vitamin B6, folate, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, copper and manganese.

Strawberry-Buttermilk Sherbet

2 cups fresh strawberries*
2 cups buttermilk
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Garnish: fresh mint sprigs

Process strawberries in a food processor or blender 30 seconds or until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides. Pour strawberry puree through a fine wire-mesh strainer into a large bowl, pressing with back of a spoon. Discard solids. Add buttermilk, sugar, and vanilla to puree; stir until well blended. Cover and chill 1 hour.

Pour strawberry mixture into freezer container of a 1-1/2-qt. electric ice-cream maker, and freeze according to manufacturer’s instructions. (Instructions and times may vary.) Garnish, if desired.

Note: *One (16-oz.) package frozen strawberries, thawed, may be substituted.

Source: Allrecipes.com

Cilantro Chutney

2 bunches fresh cilantro, leaves picked from stems
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger root
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 green chile peppers
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
1 tablespoon water, or as needed

Blend the cilantro, ginger, cumin, green chile peppers, lemon juice, and tomato sauce in a food processor or blender until finely ground. Stir water into the mixture to give a sauce-like consistency as desired.

Source: Allrecipes.com