



# TWO SMALL FARMS

## Community Supported Agriculture

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### Planning for Next Year, by Andy Griffin

With only a little more than a month left of this year's CSA delivery schedule I thought you all might like to hear about what we're doing to prepare for next year's CSA.

Besides the weekly vegetable harvest for the share boxes we're also harvesting the seed crops we've grown for some of next year's vegetables. We already have the agretti seed harvest in the can, and we only wait for the onset of cold weather to make our first planting. Agretti is one of those rare vegetables that actually won't germinate when the soil is warm.

Our seeds for Swiss chard have already been harvested, and we've even planted a crop to overwinter for very early harvests, and it has germinated very vigorously. We'll get to our seed crop of Italian, or "Erbette" chard soon. I'm hoping we don't have more rain any time soon because it helps if the seed stalks are dry when we chop them down so that the seed isn't wet when we gather it.

We have a start on our Red Orach seed crop, but we're not finished. Red Orach is an antique spinach, and one of those crops where it really makes sense to save seed; Orach seed is easy to produce and ridiculously expensive to buy, even wholesale. Not only that, but since the red color of the leaf is part of the plant's appeal (along with great flavor and ease of preparation) and since the over the counter seed is often up to 20% green in color, I've noticed that when I use my own seed, my crop comes out truer to form. We didn't have Red Orach for the CSA this year because I used my last seed to make a new seed crop, but it was always a popular vegetable when we had it in the share boxes in years past.

Besides bringing in the seed crops we're also planting next year's fertilizer crops. Where the hard squash and pumpkins were, we've already sown our winter cover crops of legumes and grasses. In early spring we will turn the crops under and prepare the soil for our summer plantings. When the tomatoes and peppers finish up, I'll plant cover crops for them too. This summer I had a Sudan grass cover crop that we turned under a month ago, and where it stood, we're planting crops of rapini. Rapini grows fast, so we'll harvest some for the CSA before this season is over, and what's left we'll let go to flower as a bee pasture. Bees love rapini blooms.

I always plant way more rapini than I can sell because I've noticed that it makes a good cover crop. Rapini is in the mustard family, and there are mustard cover crop seed blends

that are available, but I like to "multi-task!" Instead of paying a little less for mustard seed blend for crops that I intend to turn under, I spend a little more for rapini seed, and plant small blocks every chance I get. Then all winter long I harvest baby rapini greens once off each planting and sell them to the restaurants, which keeps my crew busy and employed, and then I let each crop grow out and mature. When we turn the big rapini plants under, it's as though we had been paid to grow a cover crop. Mustard covers are great because, while they don't add nitrogen like legumes do, they do add biomass, and they appear to purge the soil of pathogens.

Besides cover crops, we've also begun planting the first of the vegetable crops we'll harvest for you next year. An acre of garlic for spring garlic scallions is already in the ground and sprouted, and we've sown fava beans too. Most of the other crops wait until the first days of the New Year to go in the ground, but the way my life goes, that doesn't seem to be far off. In a month or so, I'll get all my seed orders in with my suppliers so that the seed I need will be on hand the first day of 2009 that we can plant. It takes a lot of work to be ready to roll by the middle of March.

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## This Week

Tomatoes <sup>MF</sup>

Celery OR Leeks <sup>HG</sup>

Parsley <sup>MF</sup>

Danish Beets <sup>MF</sup>

Watermelon Radishes <sup>MF</sup>

Turnips OR Mei Quin Choy <sup>HG</sup>

Cauliflower OR Cabbage <sup>MF</sup>

Mystery <sup>HG</sup>

Flowers: Mixed Bouquet <sup>HG,\*</sup>

## Notes and Recipes

*Storage notes:* Leave the tomatoes out on your kitchen counter. Store the rest of your veggies in your refrigerator. If you get strawberries, leave them out on the counter, too, and eat them fresh within the first couple of days. Remove the

greens from the radishes and turnips before storing (they stay firm longer without the greens) and use the leaves first as a cooking green.

*Here's what CSA member, Kackie, would do with this week's box:* Tomatoes will be peeled and frozen whole for the winter (cut an X in the skin on the bottom of the tomato, drop in boiling water for 30 seconds, and the peel will slip right off). *Beets:* drizzle with olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper, roast at 450° for 30–40 minutes. Serve hot or cold. *Radishes* will go in a salad. *Parsley:* I'll chop and dry part of it in a 150° oven for use as a dried seasoning. The remainder I'll use in salads and in a pot of chicken soup. *Turnips:* they'll go right in the chicken soup. *Mei Quin Choy:* rough chopped and stir fried with equal parts soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, and sesame oil. Takes two minutes and makes a great side dish. *Celery:* Half will go in the chicken soup, the other half will be chopped and put in the freezer for winter. *Leeks:* Half will go in the chicken soup and the other half in the freezer.

*Strawberries:* I'll puree them with a little sugar and use it like jelly during the weekend on toast, PB&J sandwiches, and over ice cream. *Cauliflower:* I'll chop some and take it in my lunch to work as a snack. The rest I will freeze. Frozen cauliflower is great when steamed and mashed with butter and parmesan cheese, maybe a little half and half, or heavy cream. It's a nice substitute for mashed potatoes.

*And, another approach from CSA host, David:* I'm a simple cook, along the less is more lines. The strawberries are dessert on Wednesday, and if there are any left, then they'll top the granola for breakfast on Thursday morning. The beets will get roasted and served with steamed cauliflower topped with butter and sea salt. The watermelon radish will be cut into matchsticks or thicker, with some thinly cut celery, and a little thinly shredded cabbage, hit with some lime and maybe some Tabasco, and served as a crunchy side dish to... A stir fry, with tofu or chicken, with the Mei Quin Choy and leeks. Tomatoes. It's almost the end of tomatoes season, so to keep some for winter, I'm going to make a gazpacho and freeze it. It'll taste lovely come February. The parsley will top everything. Adds a beautiful freshness to everything it goes on. Simple and tasty. Less is more.

*Plus some recipes from CSA member, Gudrun:* Watermelon Radishes: since they are so pretty, I am going serve them Ina Garten's way, with salt and good butter on baguettes.

I am hoping for Cauliflower, as I like to roast the florets with carrots and chicken legs, sprinkled with a little cumin and coriander. I will probably add the turnips to this dish, as roasted turnips are a favorite of mine.

The beets I do the same way every week! I cut the tops off, scrub them, and put them in a 9x13 pan lined with foil. I add about 3/4 cup of water and cover tightly with foil, and then roast in a 400F oven for 1.25 hours. Let cool, then rub the peel off, slice or quarter and toss with balsamic vinegar.

### Beet Gazpacho from *Gourmet.com*

2 beets, peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick	1 leek (white and pale-green parts only), halved lengthwise and coarsely chopped
½ medium onion, sliced ¼ inch thick	½ green apple, peeled, cored, and sliced ¼ inch thick
1½ TBS olive oil	4 cups water
2 TBS cider vinegar, or to taste	1 bouquet garni (2 large sprigs fresh parsley and 2 large sprigs fresh thyme tied together with kitchen string)
2 TBS plain whole-milk yogurt	1 TBS chopped dill

Wash leek in a large bowl of water, agitating it, then lift out and drain well. Cook leek, beets, onion, and apple in oil in a heavy pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, 10–12 minutes. Add water, vinegar, bouquet garni, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and cook at a bare simmer, uncovered, until vegetables and apple are tender, 30–40 minutes. Discard bouquet garni.

Purée soup in batches in a blender (use caution when blending hot liquids), then chill, covered once cool, until cold. Just before serving, season soup with salt, pepper, and vinegar. Serve cold, drizzled with yogurt and sprinkled with dill.

## Events

Join Valley of Heart's Delight for our third annual 100-Mile Thanksgiving Tasting on Friday November 14 in Palo Alto. A typical ingredient in a modern meal travels at least 1,500 miles from farm to plate. Taste an abundance of Thanksgiving Dishes using organic and locally grown food and go home inspired to create your own local Thanksgiving celebration! For more information, call 650.938.9300 x18.

### Saucy Aromatic Cabbage with Lentils from Leo Quan, based on a recipe from Madhur Jaffrey's Cook Book: *Food for Family and Friends*

3+ TBS canola oil	2 TBS cumin seeds
2 TBS fennel seeds	4 TBS sesame seeds
2 onions, thinly sliced	1 cabbage, shredded
2 medium carrots, sliced or coarsely shredded	1 TBS cumin seeds
2/3 cup dried lentils, rinsed	1 TBS chili garlic paste
2 TBS miso	Chopped cilantro (optional)
1 TBS vinegar (optional)	Cooked grain of choice

In a small or medium pot, pour in rinsed lentils. Fill with water until it is approximately 3" above lentils. Add cumin seeds. Heat to boiling and reduce to simmer. Stir occasionally.

While the lentils are simmering, start the cabbage. In a big wok or pot over medium high heat, add oil. You will need at least 3 TBS to keep seeds from burning. When oil is heated, add cumin and fennel seeds. Stir. Once they start to darken, add sesame seeds and stir. Add onion when the sesame seeds darken ever so slightly. Stir and fry until onions soften and become translucent. Add cabbage and stir, then cook covered for about a minute. Turn off heat.

Lentils are ready when they are soft all the way through. If water level is still above lentils, drain, or gently reduce liquid. Add miso, chili garlic paste and vinegar. Blend with hand blender. Stir into cabbage.

Serve on a bed of brown rice, quinoa or other grain. Garnish with chopped cilantro if desired. Serves 6–8.

### Comfort Cauliflower Soup by Nicole Friedman from *Chow.com*

1 large head cauliflower	1 large onion, chopped
2 large cloves garlic, chopped	2 cans low sodium chicken broth
1 bay leaf	½ tsp turmeric
¼ tsp nutmeg	¼ tsp cayenne pepper
kosher salt and fresh pepper	¼ cup cream
1 TBS olive oil, not virgin	

Sauté on medium heat the onion in the olive oil for 5 minutes until translucent (not brown!). Add the garlic and cauliflower florets. Sauté 5 minutes more. Add broth, bay leaf and spices. Lower heat to simmer and cook gently for 20 minutes. Puree soup. Add cream. Enjoy! Serves 4–6.

*Everything in your box and the flowers are organically grown. From Mariquita Farm: tomatoes, parsley, beets, radishes. From High Ground Organics: cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, mei quin choy, celery, leeks, mystery, some flowers. From Thomas Farm: some flowers.*