



# From Far Afield

A newsletter of the Tolstoy Farms CSA - June 21 & 24, 2017

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**T**HE STRAWBERRIES HAVE started coming in this week. Strawberries are delicious out of hand, and are also sliced on desert such as cake or ice cream, cooked in cobbler, or made into a topping sauce. Since you have lots of salad greens, consider their use in salad. Strawberries are great sliced into salads (especially spinach salad) or make a great vinaigrette.

Here are a couple more suggestions:

- \* Blend up with yogurt or soymilk and other fruits or vegetables to make a smoothie.
- \* If you have too many to eat immediately, make jam or, even quicker, stem and mash or blend and then freeze in jars for a treat for using in winter cobblers, muffins, or smoothies. Doing small batches of these things can

be quite quick, and gives you a wonderful taste of summer later in the year.

Besides strawberries, you have quite a few other items for the first time this season. I will start with the items which may be unfamiliar to our new CSA members. **Mustard greens** are the bunched, brightly colored saw-tooth greens. They have a spicy flavor reminiscent of horseradish which mellows with cooking. You can cook them like any other green (sautéed in olive oil with thinly slices scallion or minced garlic, steamed and served with vinegar), though they are also good mixed sparingly in green salads. Like other cabbage family greens such as kale, collards, and turnip greens, mustard greens are very nutritious, with very high amounts of vitamin A and C, and high amounts of calcium, copper, iron, and B-6. You can use a leaf of mustard greens on a sandwich in place of lettuce to give it a spicy zing.

You have a bunch of **garlic scapes**, the bunch of garlic smelling curlicues. These are from an early variety of garlic we grow called Tashkent Violet Streak or Uzbek. Scapes are the topsets which form on hardneck garlic plants. They can be chopped and used in soups and stir-fries just as you would use garlic. You can also eat it as a vegetable in its own right. Here's what I like to do with them: Chop off and discard the thin flat end on the pod end of the scapes... this becomes rather grass-like in its texture when cooked. Put a tablespoon or two of olive oil in a heavy skillet and heat

over a medium-high flame. Add scapes and sauté until lightly browned. Add a couple tablespoons of water and a pinch of salt. Cover the pan and steam until tender, about ten minutes. Stir occasionally and add enough water to keep from sticking if necessary. Garlic scapes cooked this way have a flavor like garlicky asparagus. Another idea is to chop and sauté the scapes in butter before adding eggs to make an omelet.

**Kohlrabi** is a close relative of broccoli and cabbage. Its bulbous stem is crunchy and sweet, having a flavor like broccoli stems with a hint of turnip. If not using within a couple of days, separate the greens from the bulb and put the greens in a ziplock baggie. Store the bulb loose in your veggie crisper. The greens should be used within a couple of days whereas the bulb can keep for a couple of weeks. Chop the greens into salad or cook as you would kale. The bulb should be peeled and then either eaten raw or cooked lightly in stir-fries or creamy soups. Kohlrabi is also great roasted and is popular in Indian cooking.

You have a bunch of small **carrots** this week. You will get carrots pretty regularly from here on out. You also have another regular, beets. This week you have one gold and two red beets. Your herb this week is dill. Enjoy.



## *In Your Box*

4 pints strawberries  
2 head spinach  
1 head lettuce  
1 bunch radish  
2 turnips  
1 bunch small carrots  
1 bunch beets  
2/3 lb snap peas  
1 kohlrabi  
1 bunch garlic scapes  
1 bunch mustard greens  
1 Chinese cabbage  
1 bunch scallions  
1 bunch dill

## Ideas for Chinese Cabbage

1. *Chinese Cabbage Rolls* Instead of using green cabbage, try some of the larger outer leaves of Chinese cabbage. Cut them in half and steam or boil them until they just turn soft and then fill with a mixture of cooked white rice and browned mild sausage or hamburger. Top with tomato sauce and bake until bubbly.
2. *Quick Kimchi* Kimchi is a spicy Korean side-dish, sort of like the hottest cole slaw you've ever eaten. Traditional kimchi can take several days to make. However, for a quick at-home version, combine a few cups of chopped Chinese cabbage, a tablespoon of sambal olek (an Eastern hot sauce), 3 tablespoons of rice wine vinegar, 4 sliced cloves of garlic, and a healthy pinch of salt. Stir well, chill overnight and then eat right out of the bowl!
3. *Chinese Cabbage Stir-Fry* If you have eaten a Chinese dish with vegetables, you have probably eaten Chinese cabbage. Typically, they are white squares that look like they should be onions, but have not turned clear. To do your own Chinese cabbage stir-fry, peel off 20 to 25 leaves and cut off the leafy green sections until all you have is the firmer white stems. Cut the white stems into two-inch pieces. Heat some peanut oil in a wok, cook the Chinese cabbage for 3 to 4 minutes until it starts to soften, and then add your favorite stir-fry sauce. Cook until the sauce starts to bubble. Serve hot over rice.
4. *Chinese Cabbage Slaw* I like to make an Asian-style coleslaw by finely chopping or shredding as much Chinese cabbage as needed, putting a bowl with shredded carrot, if desired. Sprinkle over several dashes of rice vinegar, and a dash of toasted sesame oil. Grind on salt to taste, add toasted sesame seeds, and mix well. Let sit covered for at least 15 minutes before serving.
5. *Braised Chinese Cabbage* For a quick and easy side-dish, add the cut up white stems of the Chinese cabbage to a skillet and cover them half way with vegetable broth, ground ginger, garlic powder, and a few teaspoons of soy sauce. Cook over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes or until the Chinese cabbage becomes soft.
6. *Chinese Cabbage Spring Rolls* Chinese cabbage has a great crunch that's perfect for spring rolls. Simply slice Chinese cabbage into thin strips and roll with cooked shrimp, rice noodles, and fresh basil in a spring roll wrapper. Serve with a dipping sauce of soy sauce, chilies and fish sauce.
7. *Chinese Cabbage Taco Topping* Traditionally, tacos are topped with a healthy handful of lettuce. A better choice is Chinese cabbage, which is more flavorful and totes a crisper texture, which contrasts nicely with the taco fillings.
8. *Chinese Cabbage Soup* Warm up with a hearty bowl of Chinese cabbage soup. Add a few cups of chopped Chinese cabbage to your favorite vegetable, chicken or beef soup; it will give your soup a lot of body with fewer calories than most other ingredients.

## Dill Herb of the Week

Dill had a permanent place in the gardens of ancient Athens & Rome. Aromatic wreaths of the yellow dill flowers hung in Roman banquet halls and war heroes were crowned with dill garlands on their way home. Dill has a dominant flavor. Dill's flavor is perhaps best known from dill pickles, and the ferny leaves and young seed heads should be used for pickling as well as dilled vinegar. The leaves can also be used in salads, and adds a tang to potato salad or coleslaw. Dill is delicious with cheese, cabbage, onions, cauliflower, squash eggplant, potatoes, broccoli, cucumbers, carrots, green beans, and tomatoes. It is very popular in Russian and Scandinavian dishes. Dill can be frozen on the stem; as needed, snip some off and return the rest to the freezer. Dill dries very well, too.

### Kohlrabi Fritters

- 2 kohlrabi
  - 1 carrot
  - 1 egg
  - ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
  - ¼ teaspoon cayenne
  - ½ cup grapeseed or vegetable oil (enough for ¼-inch depth in a large skillet)
  - ½ avocado
  - ¼ cup plain yogurt
  - ½ lemon
  - ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
  - Green onions (for garnish)
1. Cut the leaves off the kohlrabi and peel the bulb. Peel 1 carrot. Shred the vegetables in a food processor, or by hand using a grater. Squeeze the shredded vegetables in a tea cloth (or with your hands) to remove moisture, then add to a medium bowl with 1 egg, ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, and ¼ teaspoon cayenne. Mix to combine.
  2. Place ½ cup oil in a large skillet (enough for ¼-inch depth). Heat the oil over medium high heat, then place small patties of the fritter mixture into the oil. Fry on one side until browned, then fry on the other side. Remove and place on a plate lined with a paper towel to drain excess oil.
  3. In a small bowl, mix ½ avocado, ¼ cup plain yogurt, juice from ½ lemon, and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt to make the avocado cream (or blend the ingredients together in a food processor).
  4. Serve fritters with avocado cream and sliced green onions.