



From Far Afield

A newsletter of the Tolstoy Farms CSA - June 10 & 13, 2015

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Welcome to our first box of the 2015 CSA season. A couple words for those who are new (or reminders to those who have been CSA members before):

~**We reuse CSA boxes.** In order to reduce waste, costs and hassles, **please return boxes to us for re-use.** Also try and be careful when opening the top of box or when unfolding bottom. The **box tabs tear easily**, especially on new boxes. To avoid this grasp panel with tabs and slide backwards to disengage tabs rather than pulling panel upward or wrenching panels apart.

~Due to full CSA rosters on both Wednesdays and Saturdays, and complications inherent to doing CSA boxes, **we cannot allow switching of pick-up days from one week to the next.** If you cannot pick up a box, you may have a relative, friend, neighbor or whomever you choose pick it up for you.

~**Any CSA boxes not picked up by the time we leave market (market ends at 1:00 p.m.) are donated** to either the Downtown Women's Drop-in Center, St. Margaret's transitional shelter, or Second Harvest.

~**If you are picking up from Davenport Auto Parts, please pick up by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday.**

~**Any CSA member who has a recipe they feel others might like to use, please give us a copy to print in the newsletter.**

We usually print recipes every week, and are greatly appreciative of any we receive. Please email or post them to the above address, or bring a copy by the stand (e-mailing is best). Or post it on our facebook page. Recipes should include some type of regionally grown produce. Thanks to all who donated recipes last year... if you gave a recipe and never saw it in print, it is because we got it after the produce used in it was no longer in the boxes. We will use those recipes this year.

~**Speaking of Facebook, if you use this service check out our page and like us.**

[Here](#) is a link if you are viewing this on your computer. Pictures of food you make with our produce make nice facebook posts, too.

~**CSA members receive 15% off any additional produce purchased** at our stand (not including special order or already discounted bulk items.) Please be sure to tell the cashier you are a CSA member to receive your discount.

~**"In Your Box" lists apply to full share CSA's; Half shares get roughly half of that.** Thus if list says 2, half's get 1; if list says one, half's get a smaller one.

~**For new CSA customers:** The boxes start a bit light with lots of greens and increase in volume, diversity and weight as the season commences.

So onto your produce. means greens in our neighborhood. This week you have two heads of **lettuce**. These are lettuce from our greenhouse and are quite large. Having a greenhouse is like having a slice of California in the garden, and things tend to get bigger faster. In addition to the large lovely lettuce, you have **spinach**. Spinach is a delicious and very nutritious green, high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C. It is delicious raw as a salad with a balsamic vinaigrette; sautéed in olive oil with garlic and pine nuts; steamed and served with a splash of vinegar; baked in casseroles or lasagna; used in light soups or heavy stews; or put in stir

fries as the final ingredient. Spinach has such a vibrant taste and mouth-feel, especially this time of year. I eat some fresh-from-the-garden spinach this time of year, and I feel as though I'm sloughing off the last of the winter hibernation.

You have a small 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.

The rainbow-colored greens are **Swiss chard**. Chard is a delicious, and like most greens, highly nutritious food, very high in Vitamins A, C, and B's; iron, calcium, and phosphorus. Chard is the same species as beet, bred for large, prolific leaf production rather than large, bulbous roots. The leaves are not as strongly flavored as beet greens. It is delicious sautéed, steamed, or used in soups or stews.

You also have a bunch of white **turnips**. Turnips are a vegetable which has a bad reputation amongst many due to their having eaten only large, bitter storage turnips, warehoused overly long and ill prepared. Let me beseech you: if such has been the extent of your experience, give these turnips a try. Fresh young tur-

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In Your Box

- 2 head spinach (~1 1/2 lb.)
- 2 lettuce
- 1 bunch radish
- 1 bunch turnips
- 1 bunch Swiss chard
- 1 bunch mustard greens
- 1 bok choy
- 1 bunch garlic scapes
- 1 bunch green onions
- 1 bunch peppermint

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nips are a whole different experience from large storage turnips (think the difference between new baby potatoes and large, old russets bought at the grocery store.) Fresh turnips are crunchy, juicy and sweet, with a flavor like a cross between broccoli stems and mild radish. You may notice slight blemishes on some of the turnips. This is, once again, wireworm damage. Cabbage family crops, of which turnips are one, are especially susceptible. Pare out any damage and they are fine. You can use them fresh chopped or grated in salad. You can steam or sauté them briefly or use them in soups or stews. The greens are also quite delicious and nutritious, a top-rate green. Cook them as a potherb, or, again, added to soups or stews. A fellow here on the farm currently recently made turnip green chips (think kale chips) and was very pleased with the result.

The bunch of spiky, light green colored leaves are **mustard greens**. Mustard greens have a delicious peppery flavor, somewhat akin to horseradish. These greens are great cooked in olive oil or butter with garlic, added to a stew, or added onto a sandwich for a spicy “lettuce” leaf. They are also very good steamed in a mix with other greens. Mustard greens seem to be the number two green for folks from the south when collards are unavailable... for Southern-style greens cook them in bacon grease.

There is a bunch of Asian greens in your box: **bok choy**. These are basically very mild, crunchy, sweet Asian cabbages. They are used in Asian stir-fries and coleslaws. This is a very yummy green.

There is a bunch of rainbow colored **radishes** in your box. These, too, are very good in a salad. Radishes are cooked in many Asian cultures, as are the greens. You need nice, fresh radish greens to desire cooking them, and here you have them. You can use them in stir fries or soups. A description of the herb, peppermint, follows. Welcome to the 2015 season and thank you for supporting our farm. If you have any questions, concerns, problems, or comments during the season, please direct them to me, Tim, or to Joe, either at the stand or at the contacts listed in the masthead. Enjoy your produce.

Pickled Hakurei Turnips

Pickled turnips are popular in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries (where they are commonly eaten as an accompaniment to most meals, including breakfast) as well as in Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries. Hakurei is the variety we grow on the farm. This is a quick refrigerator pickle version.

- 1 bunch hakurei turnips
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 tea black peppercorns, crushed
- 3 thin slices of ginger

Wash turnips well and slice them thinly on a mandolin. Place turnip slices in a small bowl and toss with the salt. Let rest until there is a pool of liquid on the bottom of the bowl, about 30 minutes. Drain turnips of the salty water and pack into a pint sized mason jar.

Add vinegar, sugar, pepper and ginger slices. Apply a watertight lid and shake to combine. Place pickled turnips in the fridge and chill before eating. Pickles can be eaten within an hour of being made and will keep for at least a week.

Our Organic Promise

Our farm has been Certified Organic for about a quarter century. Before being certified, our community used and was dedicated to using organic methods for decades. The intentional community which our farm acreage is a part of has organic methods stipulated in its bylaws, and the land on which we farm has never had synthetic chemical inputs or applications. We are dedicated to having healthy, sustainable, productive farming without the use of synthetic chemical inputs. Whether as pesticides, fertilizers, seed treatments... we will farm without them. This is our promise to you. It is an easy promise for us to make, because for us this is not simply a means of production or a revenue stream; it is a way of life.

Peppermint Herb of the Week

Mint has a long history as a valued culinary, medicinal, & aromatic herb. Peppermint is used medicinally as a tea for stomach upset, cold, flu, & insomnia.

Culinarily, peppermint is used in iced or hot tea, in cracked wheat salad, in fruit salads, in marinades, and as a garnish for punch or fruit. On the island of Sicily and in Southern Italy, mint is used as a primary herbal seasoning. Mint goes well with eggplant, white & black beans, lentils, creamy vegetable soups, steamed carrots, and new potatoes. For sauces in which the mint is cooked some people prefer the milder flavored spearmint, though I use peppermint with good result in such situations. Mint is excellent minced fresh or crushed dry and added to baked sweets, such as cookies, cake, or brownies. Mint can even be steeped in a soothing bath.

To dry mint, hang in a warm, airy place out of direct sunlight. When completely dry, strip leaves from the stems. Store in an airtight container away from light.

For tea, put peppermint in a clear glass jar with a lid. Fill with fresh water. (A one gallon jar works great.) Experiment with exactly how much mint to use with each batch. Place in direct sun for a day, or until tea is steeped to your liking. Chill, pour into a drinking glass with ice, if preferred, sweeten to taste, add a twist of lemon if desired, & enjoy!

Using Fresh Herbs

Replace fresh herbs for dried in a recipe at a rate of 3 fresh for 1 dried. Avoid over chopping herbs. Woody stems should be removed, but soft stems can be used. Add fresh herbs later in cooking than dried; more pungent and tougher-leaved varieties such as oregano, thyme and rosemary can be added 15-20 minutes before finishing; more delicate herbs like basil, parsley, and cilantro should be added in the last few minutes or sprinkled on fresh on as a garnish. Most herbs, with the exception of cilantro, can be dried, frozen, or infused in vinegar to preserve the flavor.