

The Stanton Street Harvest

JUNE 18, 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S PIONEER CSA

VOL. 4, NO. 1

TODAY'S WEATHER
AT WINDFLOWER FARM



63°/59°

It's rainy up there too, but chillier.
They're expecting about an inch.

GREENS 101

Lots of Ways to Cook Those Greens

Ready for greens? We hope so, because Farmer Ted is planning to deliver either a cooking green or a salad green (or both) with every delivery this season. Salad greens you already know what to do with. But for those not already in the habit of cooking up bunches of greens, here are some hints about storage, prep, and cooking.

Storage & Handling: Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to a week. Just prior to use, swish leaves in a large basin of cool water. After any grit has settled to the bottom, lift the leaves out carefully. Additional washing may be necessary. A "salad spinner" is a real handy tool for cleaning gritty greens. It's a good investment for any CSA household.

Don't Overcook: This rule of thumb applies to all cooking with vegetables: Use your judgment as to when your vegetables are done. Vegetables aren't uniform from farm to farm or from day to day. Rainy seasons produce vegetables with higher water content than dry seasons. Overripe vegetables may be extra tender or waterlogged. A vegetable held for a week in the refrigerator is not the same as one freshly harvested. Judging when a vegetable is done is never simply a matter of using a timer accurately.

Sauteing: This is a simple approach you can take with any of the cooking greens you'll get this season: kale, chard,

—continued on page 2

THE LONG, LONG WAIT IS OVER WELCOME (BACK?) TO CSA SEASON

The core group probably doesn't need to tell you how excited we are to be kicking off our fifth season today, because odds are you're feeling it too.

It's been over six months since Farmer Ted's last weekly delivery. The expanded offerings of our winter program helped lessen the withdrawal symptoms for many of us, but there's no real substitute for CSA produce in peak season. And here we are again—about to revel in the best food months of the year. For the next 22 weeks we'll all be sharing in Windflower Farm's harvest, and we'll watch our menus at home change as we move from this early wet weather to the hot months of the summer and then into the cool late season.

Your core group will strive to make this newsletter a sort of user's manual for your share each week. We'll try to anticipate what Ted will be delivering, and we'll put as much useful information, in the form of storage and preparation tips and recipes, as we can fit onto a single sheet of paper. (Today, alas, Ted is driving along in the delivery truck, so he can teach his new driver the route. That means he didn't have time to e-mail us with any news about the first week shares.)

We hope you'll find it a useful part of the CSA experience, and—most importantly—we encourage all shareholders to contribute recipes, suggestions or even basic questions that you'd like answered. The more you chip in, the better the newsletter will be.

Since we don't have any vegetables to discuss this week, we'll take the opportu-

nity to provide details about a few of the features and programs of the Stanton Street CSA.

Bread Shares: We're excited to be offering these for the first time this season. We've told you all about them by e-mail already, but you should know that there's still time to sign up. The first bread delivery is next week. If you're interested, e-mail us ASAP.

Ordering "Extras": As shareholders you're able to purchase to all manner of wonderful meats, cheeses, dairy products, jam, syrup, honey, and more from our friends at Lewis-Waite Farm and their producer-partners. All you need to do is go to www.csalewiswaitefarm.com to place your order. (The first time you order, use "stanton street" as the username and "settlement" as the password.) Deliveries will be just about every other week throughout the season. You pay Lewis-Waite directly, either via PayPal or by bringing a check to the pick-up. Order now, because they'll be coming next Thursday!

Compost your kitchen scraps: You can cut down on your household waste and help out our community garden at the same time: Save your kitchen scraps and drop them off on Thursday nights for composting.

We'll accept any of these items: all fruit and vegetable peelings, pits and scraps; non-greasy food scraps or leftovers; rice, pasta, cereal, bread; coffee grounds, coffee filters; egg shells, nut shells; cut or dried flowers, wreaths; houseplants and potting soil; and hair clippings.

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Community Notes. . .

NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

Remember, we need four volunteers for each shift, and two shifts per season from each member.

Jun. 2, Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

C. Pierce, R. Parson

Jun. 2, Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

No one's signed up yet!

—*Greens 101, from page 1*

collards, turnip, or beet greens—even the radish greens. It's a great way to give them an added richness while preserving their fresh taste and delicate texture.

Sauteed greens mix well with almost anything: toss them with cooked grain or pasta for a main course, serve them as a side, or dress them with a vinaigrette and have a warm or cool salad. If you are using greens with hearty stems, such as chard, cut out the stems, chop, and sauté them before adding the leaves to give them enough time to cook.

Heat some butter or oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add a little chopped garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the greens immediately after rinsing them, with water still clinging to the leaves. Cover; cook for 1-2 minutes. Uncover, add salt to taste, and give the greens a good flip and stir. Cover again and continue cooking until they are bright green, tender, and wilted to your taste—from just a few minutes to 15 minutes depending on their maturity.

Steaming: To steam vegetables, bring a few inches of water to a boil, place the vegetables in a steaming basket or colander, place the basket over the boiling water, cover the pot, and cook the vegetables until tender.

Steamed vegetables are fine served plain, but a pat of butter and a sprinkling of fresh herbs go far in enlivening the flavors. Steamed vegetables are also enhanced with a drizzle of vinaigrette.

(*Next week: Braising and blanching. . .*)

The Stanton Street Harvest is published weekly by and for members of the Stanton Street CSA (P.O. Box 971, NYC 10002; <http://stantonstreetcsa.wordpress.com>). Thanks to core groupers Lucinda Sears (for her lovely illustrations) and Laura Schalchli (for her editorial wrangling). Most of the recipes and food info from cookbooks by Alice Waters, Deborah Madison, Farmer John Peterson, and other food geniuses. Please send questions, recipes, letters to the editor or other contributions to stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com.

HERB VINEGAR

(from *Serving Up the Harvest* by Andrea Chesman)

Here's a simple project you might want to try. If you start now, you'll have a wonderful ingredient for vinaigrettes and other dressings during the hot summer months when we're inundated with tomatoes and cucumbers and the like.

It's easiest to begin the process in a regular canning jar. After the vinegar is infused, you may want to transfer it to a better bottle for pouring. Recycled wine bottles work well, and can be used as gift bottles as well. Corks are available from many hardware stores.

1 1/2 to 2 cups fresh, firmly packed herbs (a single type or a mixture of herbs), plus additional herbs to identify the finished product
3 to 3 1/2 cups red wine, white wine, or sherry vinegar
Wash the herbs in a basin of cool

water. Remove any discolored or insect-damaged leaves. It is fine to keep the leaves on the stems. Dry the herbs in a salad spinner or pat dry. Be sure the herbs are completely dry before proceeding. Pack the herbs into a clean canning jar. Pour the vinegar over the herbs.

Store in a cool, dark place for 2 to 6 weeks, shaking the mixture every few days. Begin tasting after 2 weeks. When the vinegar is flavorful, it is ready.

Pack a single fresh herb into a clean storage bottle to identify the flavoring in the bottle. This is optional, but very helpful.

Strain the vinegar through a coffee filter to remove all herbal debris, and pour into the storage bottle. Cork or cap, label, and store in a dark cool place. The vinegar will keep indefinitely.

Makes 1 quart

—*CSA Basics, from page 1*

Please *do not* bring any of these items: meat, chicken or fish; dairy products; greasy food scraps; fats, oils, grease, etc.; bones; charcoal or ashes; coconuts, walnut shells; rhubarb leaves; plants or wood that has been chemically treated; diseased or insect-infested plants; or pet waste or kitty litter.

The most commonly heard advice from people who are already in the habit of saving their compostables is to collect the scraps in a plastic grocery bag or some other container and store it in your freezer during the week. There's no smell and no mess. It's easy to pull out and add to when you're cooking, and it's easy to transport to the garden on Thursdays.

Green storage bags: We've procured a large supply of those fancy green produce storage bags you may have seen around, and they'll be on sale here every week—3 bags for \$2.00.

They come in medium and large sizes. Your faithful editor has used these bags for the last four CSA seasons, and swears that they really do keep refrigerated produce fresher longer. They're also reusable and should last you the whole season. Apparently the secret is that

the bags are coated with a fine layer of natural clay containing high levels of a mineral proven to absorb ethylene gas.

When produce ripens it emits ethylene, which speeds up the process of ripening and rotting. Who knew?

Your CSA library: Now there's something else you can take home along with all your CSA produce: A cookbook full of ideas about what to make for dinner. We've stocked a lending library with some of our favorite produce-centric cookbooks, and they're available to members for browsing or borrowing every Thursday.

You'll find *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, *Farmer John's Cookbook*, *The Produce Bible*, and many others. And it's not only cookbooks. We've got great books about local food, sustainable agriculture, and classic works on the environment and conservation. Mark Bittman and Michael Pollan are there side by side with Wendell Berry and Aldo Leopold. Ask a volunteer for help with checking out.

Please save those empty cartons: If you have a fruit and/or an egg share, please do bring back the empty paper cartons. The farmers are happy to save money and resources by reusing them.