

# The Stanton Street Harvest

JULY 9, 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S PIONEER CSA

VOL. 4, NO. 4

TODAY'S WEATHER  
AT WINDFLOWER FARM



53°/74°

At last! A break from all the rain!  
A.M. clouds and P.M. sun.

## TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

### Always Something to Worry About

I worked on one of my cultivating tractors today. It was the fifty-year-old Farmall—it's not pretty, but it still runs beautifully, the engine purring as it moves over the tops of our vegetable beds, efficiently burying weeds. This was the first day that I'd been able to get back in the fields since last week's many storms. The cloudbursts came in waves, one after the next, depositing more than six inches of rain in two days on top of soils already saturated by June's rains.

I was cultivating winter squashes—the acorns, butternuts, delicatas and sweet dumplings that we hope to include in your last eight or ten shares of the season. Returning members will recall that a disease killed last year's entire winter squash crop, so we have been working hard on this year's planting. I receive a weekly crop report from the Extension service. This week's report made me want to turn and run.

The cool and rainy weather we've experienced since mid-May is now cause for real concern. Downy mildew, a wind-borne pathogen capable of destroying a crop, appears to be making its way on high altitude currents from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. And black rot (a.k.a. gummy stem blight), the disease that ruined last year's crop, is always nearby.

The potential for disease exists in nearly every vegetable planting (that's one of the reasons conventional farmers

—continued on page 2

## IT'S LOOKING LIKE A BUMPER CROP OF CUCUMBERS THIS YEAR

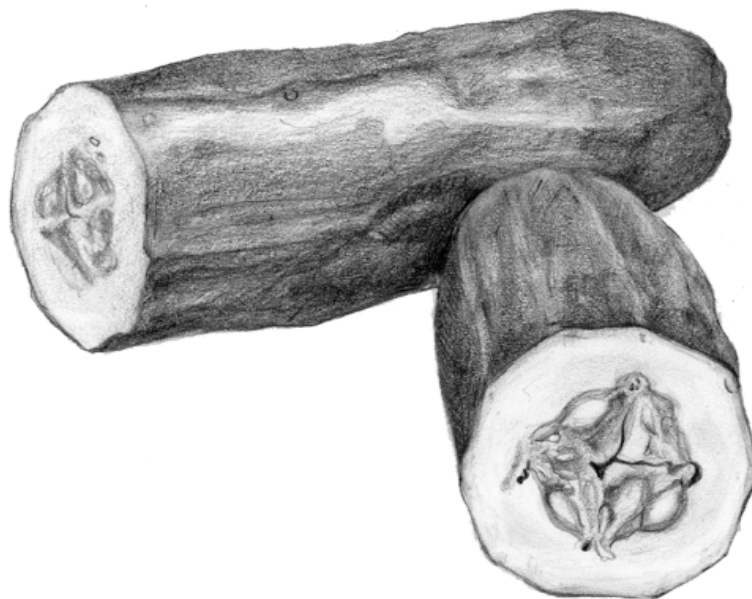
Cucumbers require a lot of care in the field, but they're not usually demanding in the kitchen. It's easy to find a home for them in salads and sandwiches, or simply enjoy them raw—sliced with a sprinkle of salt.

Most supermarket cucumbers have endured a journey of many hundreds of miles from where they were grown. To keep them from drying out, on their long trip, their skins are usually waxed. Since Ted doesn't like the idea of feeding his shareholders wax, he leaves his cucumbers in their natural wax-free state.

Because they dehydrate faster than the waxy kind, be sure to get them in the refrigerator right away. If you store unwashed cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator, they'll hold for about a week. Keep cucumbers tucked far away from tomatoes, apples, and citrus—these give off ethylene gas that accelerates cucumber deterioration.

When a cucumber is young, fresh, and unwaxed, it really only needs to be thoroughly washed and then quar-

tered, sliced, or left whole, depending on the intended use. Cucumbers for salads may need to be peeled if they are thick-skinned; otherwise it is a matter of personal preference. Don't seed the cucumbers unless the seeds are overdeveloped and hard. However, if a recipe calls for you to seed them before slicing or dicing them, simply cut the cucumbers in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds with a spoon.



Cucumbers dressed in advance or used in a sauce may give up too much water and dilute the flavor of the dish. To forestall this, lightly salt the prepared cucumbers, let them sit in a strainer for ten minutes, wrap them in a clean kitchen towel, and wring out the excess moisture.

## Community Notes. . .

### NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

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

#### Jul. 16 Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

K. Walko, P. Woodward, A. Laguarda, E. Cohen

#### Jul. 16 Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

Y. Yuen, K. Browne, C. Singiser, T. Carr

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### EXTRAS! EXTRAS!

The next deadline for ordering what we call “extras” from our friends at [www.csalewiswaitefarm.com](http://www.csalewiswaitefarm.com) is this Saturday, July 11 at midnight. All manner of delicious meats, cheeses, yogurts, breads, honey, jams and sauces are available for purchase directly from the farms that produce them. The goods will be delivered next Thursday, July 16.

—*Letter from the Farm, from page 1*

use so many fungicides). But for a disease to actually become a problem, three things must come into alignment: we must be growing a susceptible plant, a plant pathogen must be present, and we must be experiencing the weather conditions suitable for disease. Plant pathologists call this the “disease triangle.”

All squashes, melons and cucumbers are susceptible to downy mildew and gummy stem blight. Plant breeders have not had success producing varieties with resistance to these pathogens. In the case of gummy stem blight, the pathogen initially makes its way to a farm on newly purchased seeds or plants, and then survives from one year to the next in all kinds of nooks and crannies found around the farm.

What have we done to lessen the risk that a disease will ruin our squash crop? Knowing what we do about how diseases spread, we took several precautions. First, we switched seed suppliers, believing that the initial source of last year’s pathogen was a small organic seed supplier in Vermont whose sanitation practices were not up to par. Second, knowing how the pathogen survives in nooks and crannies, we purchased new trays for growing our young plants, and used a greenhouse that had never before been used for squashes. Finally,

### TASTY CUCUMBER SALAD

from core group member Julia Li

This is an adaptation of an Austrian cucumber salad Julia’s mom makes, with the addition of CSA veggies that we typically see this time of year.

2 cucumbers  
1 scallion  
3 radishes  
1/2 of an apple  
1/2 of a kohlrabi  
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar  
2-3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon caraway seeds

Thinly slice cucumbers with a mandolin, then generously coat with salt and let them sweat in a colander for about half an hour.

Meanwhile, mix up the vinegar, oil and sugar, making sure the sugar fully dissolves. Chop the kohlrabi and apple into matchsticks. Thinly slice the radishes and scallions (both the white and green parts). Rinse the salt off the cucumbers and shake off excess water, then toss everything in a bowl and let marinate for at least half an hour. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Serves 4

### SWISS CHARD WITH TOASTED BREADCRUMBS

from our very own Farmer Ted

1 bunch Swiss chard  
1/2 cup fresh breadcrumbs  
2 1/2 tablespoons butter  
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper  
Pinch of sugar (optional)

Melt 1/2 tablespoon of butter over medium heat in a medium sized saucepan. Add the breadcrumbs and a pinch of salt and pepper. Toss the crumbs until golden brown (about 2-3 minutes), then set aside. Wipe the pan

clean with a paper towel.

Trim the chard and slice crosswise in 3/4-inch strips. Separate the stems from the leaves. Melt the remaining butter over medium-high heat in the saucepan. First add the stems and cook until tender (about 4-6 minutes). Then add the leaves, cover, and cook until wilted (about 5 minutes). Uncover and cook until the pan is dry (about 5 minutes more). Season with salt and pepper, add sugar, and top with the toasted breadcrumbs.

Serves 4

### BREAD & BUTTER PICKLES

from our very own Farmer Ted

2 3/4 cups thinly sliced cucumbers  
3/4 tablespoons kosher salt  
1/2 cup thinly sliced onion  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup white vinegar  
1/4 cup cider vinegar  
1/8 cup packed brown sugar  
3/4 teaspoon mustard seeds  
1/4 teaspoon celery seeds  
1/16 teaspoon turmeric

Combine cucumbers and salt in a

large bowl; cover and chill 1 1/2 hours. Drain and rinse the cucumbers under cold water. Drain again and return them to the bowl. Add the sliced onion.

Combine the sugar and remaining ingredients in a medium saucepan; bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Pour the hot mixture over the cucumbers; let stand at room temperature for one hour. Cover and refrigerate 24 hours. Store in an air-tight container in refrigerator up to two weeks.

we transplanted our squashes into fields that had not been used to grow squashes before. So far, after a thorough inspection from the seat of my Farmall, I can report that our two large winter squash fields are disease-free. And, after today’s work with the cultivator, they are weed-free, too. Now let’s hope that the sky doesn’t rain downy mildew spores. If all goes well, you should see your first winter squashes in about ten weeks.

Next week we’ll try to deliver our first potatoes (assuming I can get the old

digger working). And the corn crop is definitely coming along, but the cold weather has delayed its arrival by a couple of weeks.

*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](mailto:stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com).