

The Stanton Street Harvest

JULY 17, 2008

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S CSA

VOL. 3, NO. 5

TODAY'S WEATHER AT WINDFLOWER FARM



88°/65°

Sun and clouds mixed.
Chance of precipitation 20%

TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

The Folks Who Pick (And Pack) Your Vegetables

Along with his update from the farm, Ted sent us the following disclaimer about last week's letter: "No, I didn't actually tie Bob the beagle to a stake in the lettuce field. Can you imagine leaving such a friendly little dog out there all alone? Besides, Jan wouldn't let me."

By Ted Blomgren

Late last summer a man named Hiliberto stopped by hoping to find work for his brother-in-law, Salvador, and his father, Ezequiel, whom he hadn't seen in five years. They live in the mountains a few hours outside of Mexico City, and Hiliberto lives near here. I agreed, needing a farm staff that started earlier in the spring and worked later in the fall than my crew of school kids and their moms.

Salvador and Ezequiel have been living in the apartment above our barn since mid-April. It's rustic but does have heat and hot water, a toilet and shower, a kitchen, a TV, and a washer and dryer. At mealtimes the most delicious smells come wafting down the steps to our packing room. It's tortillas every day at lunch. On the weekends they get together with Hiliberto and his family for recreation and shopping. They are friendly, hard-working, and patient with my poor language skills. I hope they return next year.

The entire farm crew is learning

—continued on page 2

LET'S ALL TAKE A FEW MINUTES TODAY TO REFLECT ON THE BEAUTY OF COMPOST

Three cheers for shareholder Anya Kamenetz who has volunteered to take charge of our newly formed compost committee! Compost tumblers are en route to the garden, and we should be ready to accept your scraps in the next two weeks.

By Anya Kamenetz

WHEN OUR CSA COMPOST program gets started, we'll be helping the earth and our community in a whole bunch of ways.

First and most obvious, our food scraps will provide a rich natural source of fertilizer and generally improve the environment for our host, the M'finda Kalunga community garden. Compost adds an array of nutrients to soil, ups the numbers of beneficial microorganisms that break down organic matter into plant-available nutrients, and improves the water-holding capacity and texture of soil. Adding compost can even detoxify contaminated city soil. Compost absorbs odors and degrades pesticides and hydrocarbons in soil. Those amazing bugs can even bind heavy metals and prevent them from migrating to water resources.

In the bigger picture, compost helps fight global warming. Food waste that degrades in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than CO₂. When compost is properly aerated, as it will be in our tumblers, it decomposes aerobically. While this process does produce CO₂, it doesn't produce methane. Instead those hydrocarbons stay in the soil for plants to use.

By composting in the city with the scraps of veggies that are delivered from the country, we're helping to close a waste loop. It's estimated that up to 45% of all waste could be composted! In San Francisco, which has a curbside compost program and col-

lects food waste from restaurants, some establishments are achieving a 90% reduction in their waste stream. The more community compost programs we have in New York, the closer we are to making a citywide program like San Francisco's a reality. It's a true example of acting locally and thinking globally.

Finally, I think composting will be a positive practice for my family—and yours! The sheer necessity of saving food scraps in a container in the freezer and carrying them to the garden will cause us to think harder about waste and the resources we use. Can we eat those beet greens? Can we cut that melon a little closer to the rind? Can we plan a little better to use all of the CSA delivery while it's fresh? It's these experiences that help us all get a little more down to earth.

A Delicious Bouquet



Broccoli is a flower—a bunch of flowers to be exact. All those tiny little buds just haven't opened up yet. And this is one flower with no shortage of culinary uses. It's ideal for steaming or stir-frying. For salads and vegetable plates, you may first want to blanch broccoli in boiling water for 1 minute and then chill it. Use chopped broccoli as a pizza topping or in any combination with tomatoes. Broccoli's tiny flower buds delightfully soak up luscious sauces and juices.

Community Notes...

NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

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

July 24, Early Shift (5:00-6:30 p.m.)

R. Insler, E. Serlis, T. Garcia Gibson

July 24, Closing Shift (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

N. Cheung, J. Taras

WINDFLOWER FARM FIELD TRIP

We're going to visit Windflower Farm on August 23-24. We'll hang out with Farmer Ted, see where our food comes from, share a potluck meal, camp out, and generally have a grand time. Want to come along? Can you provide your own transportation or offer a ride to others? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, please send us an e-mail with more details. We're putting together plans now, and step one is figuring out transportation. If you've got a car and can provide rides for anyone, the CSA will pay for your gas.

—Ted's Letter, from page 1

Spanish. English-Spanish translations cover our barn walls. *Mala hierbo* is weed. *Mala hierbos grande* are the kind of weeds we have here. Heidi calls them "job security." Heidi, who has been with us for three years, is our field manager. It's a new position here, intended to allow me time to keep up with planting and cultivating. Heidi often provides a morning coffee cake or muffins. Her two kids—Jordan, who is home from college, and Mackenzie, who wears orange polka-dot boots—also work with us. They apprenticed on a small farm just north of here and come well-trained.

Victoria and her sister Naomi run the packing shed. They've worked with us for years and know not only how we do things, but have ideas about how we ought to do them. They are constantly making improvements. This year they've added a coffee maker and a microwave oven, informing me that "happy workers are productive workers." They also frequently provide chocolates in the afternoon, earning my lasting affection. Their job is to take the produce from the field, move it through the hydro-cooling process, sort it, box it and place it in the cooler. As we do every year, we've also hired a handful of teenagers. They

SAUTÉED KOHLRABI

(from *World Vegetarian* by Madhur Jaffrey)

As worthy as turnips and as delicious as cauliflower, kohlrabi somehow remains almost unknown in America. If you could take the best part of a broccoli stem and blow it up into a turnip shape, you'd get a sense of the taste and texture of the bottom half of a kohlrabi. These heads require peeling and are delicious raw or cooked. The second part is the green leaves, which sprout from the sides and the top. They are rather like collards or kale and may be cooked exactly like them.

2 large kohlrabi heads

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Cut off 1/8 of each kohlrabi from the bottom end. Peel the rest and cut into 1/8-inch strips. Stacking the slices together, cut into fine strips.

Put the oil and butter in a large frying pan and set over medium heat. When the butter has melted, put in the kohlrabi. Stir and sauté on medium-low heat for 6 to 7 minutes, or until the kohlrabi is just tender. Add the salt and pepper to taste.
Serves 4

KOHLRABI SALAD

(sent in by shareholder Diana Lyon)

When it's too hot to cook, you can still eat your vegetables.

1 large kohlrabi head, peeled and cut into matchsticks
1 medium carrot, peeled and cut likewise
1 medium turnip, peeled and cut likewise
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 tablespoon olive oil
Fresh dill, chopped
Fresh mint, chopped
Salt and pepper

Put the kohlrabi, carrot, and turnip in a bowl. Add the salt and mix well. Set aside for 30 minutes. Drain the extracted liquid. Add the lemon juice, vinegar, oil and seasonings. Toss and taste, adjusting the seasonings as necessary.
Serves 4

STEAMED BROCCOLI WITH ASIAN-STYLE DRESSING

1 medium head broccoli
1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
3 tablespoons peanut oil
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
Separate the florets from the stalk;

break into smaller florets. Cut the stalk into 1-inch lengths and then into matchstick-size strips. Place the broccoli in a steamer basket set over 1 1/2 inches boiling water and cover. Steam for 5 minutes. Transfer the broccoli to a bowl.

Combine the remaining ingredients in a small bowl; stir until combined. Pour the dressing over the broccoli and mix well.
Serves 2 to 4

require Heidi's constant attention. They leave at the end of August, but by then they'll have our farm weed-free and given me time to finish a number of projects.

The hot, humid weather has pushed the broccoli crop along a little too fast, causing some to spoil, and forcing us to harvest it all a bit too quickly. More will be coming in another couple of weeks. Next week we'll probably send green cabbage, lettuce, arugula or a salad mix, more cukes and zukes, possibly more peppers, more scallions or green onions, and perhaps some green garlic. With continued good weather, our first tomatoes should be ready shortly.

We've been leasing a refrigerated box truck for the last two weeks. We pack the truck in the evening the day before we head to the city, and we set the thermostat for 42° F. I mention it because it's intended to keep your vegetables fresher, and I'm curious to know if it's working.

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 shareholder Lucinda Sears for the lovely illustrations. We plundered most of the recipes and food info from cookbooks by Alice Waters, Deborah Madison, Farmer John Peterson, and other food geniuses. **We heartily encourage all shareholders to send questions, recipes, letters to the editor or other contributions to stantonstreetcsa@gmail.com.**