

# The Stanton Street Harvest

JULY 23, 2009

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'S PIONEER CSA

VOL. 4, NO. 6

## TODAY'S WEATHER AT WINDFLOWER FARM



61°/76°

Alas, a few showers expected to develop during the afternoon.

## TED'S LETTER FROM THE FARM

### Growing All This Food Is a Family Affair

It's just about noon on Sunday, and the Medinas, the family of four from Mexico who work with us, are heading in for lunch. It's almost always tortillas. Tortillas con frijoles, tortillas con arroz, but most of all, tortillas con carne. Meats of all kinds make their way into the daily tortilla. Last year, after a rainy period produced puddles with large populations of frogs, Esequiel's joke was that lunch was tortillas con sapo.

On the day that Candelaria, Esequiel's daughter, arrived here from Mexico, she presented us with tamales that she had made at home and hand-knit place settings. Since then, we've had her tacos, enchiladas, and quesadillas, all made with her own tortillas. She loves to feed people. She's an excellent cook, and has made use of every kind of vegetable we grow here (last week she dropped off a sampler of broccoli fritos con huevos), and an array of local game, including deer, rabbit and squirrel. She works slightly fewer hours on the farm than the men in her family so that she can prepare the evening meal.

The people who grow your food are not particularly well paid, but they do earn \$3 per hour above this week's new federal minimum wage. They are provided with housing, utilities, round-trip travel from home, and significant quantities of vegetables free of charge. And they have a pretty good environment in

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## BEETS ARE TASTY. SO ARE BEET GREENS.

Unlike any other root vegetables, the beet (*Beta vulgaris*) has intense, highly saturated, jewel-like colors. Besides the familiar purple of the common round beet, there are golden beets the color of carnelian, pink beets, and white beets, and even two-toned beets—the Chioggia variety, for example, which resembles a bull's-eye in cross section.

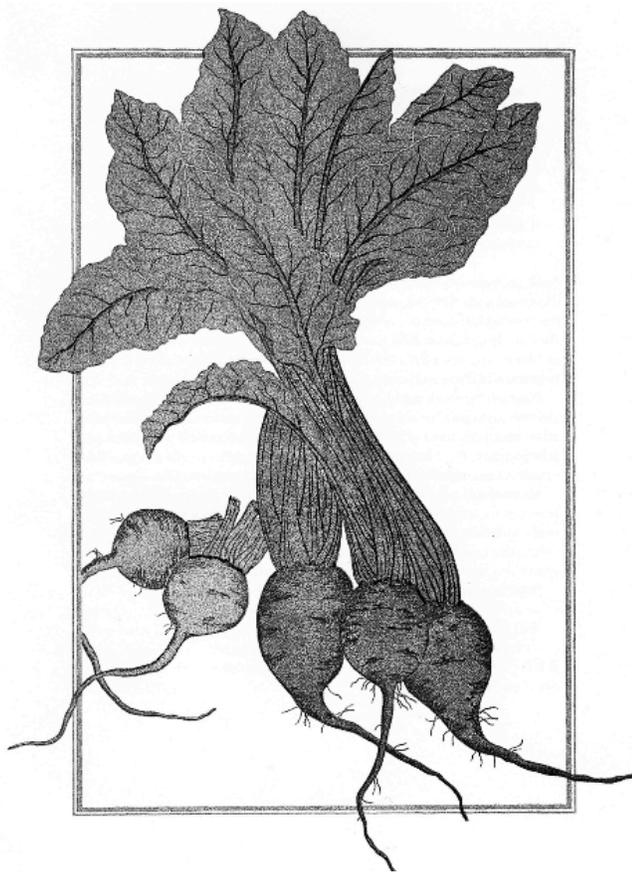
There are variations in the flavor as well as in size and color: Chioggia beets are quite mild, while the larger red beets will have a much stronger flavor, with a little bitterness to them.

Beets belong to the goose-foot family, and their closest relatives—chard, spinach—are cultivated for their greens. Not surprising then, that beet greens are delicious. They have a thick, fleshy texture and a mild flavor well suited to slow braising (they are not sharp and pungent like turnip greens). Some beet varieties are grown for their edible greens alone.

It's preferable to roast beets, rather than boiling them, because they lose less flavor and color. Beets start bleeding their vivid juice as soon as they are cut.

Beets keep best wrapped loosely in the refrigerator. Tops wilt fast, and turn yellow and slimy. If you are not using the roots right away, cut off the greens a little above the root and cook them up within a day or two. The roots will keep well for another week or so. For any recipe, beets must be cooked until they are completely tender but not mushy. If

they are even a little undercooked, they may retain an unpleasant bitterness.



**CILANTRO ANYONE?** It's the parsley of the eastern and southern half of Asia, also known as green coriander. Generally just the delicate, fragrant green leaves are used. Some recipes also call for the stems, which are generally cut crosswise into minute dice. If you can't re-pot the fresh cilantro, stand it in a glass of water, cover it with a plastic bag, and refrigerate the whole thing. Break off the leaves as you need them and keep the rest refrigerated. The water should be changed daily and the dead leaves removed.

## Community Notes. . .

### NEXT WEEK'S VOLUNTEERS

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

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

T. Huxley, A. Hawkins, K. Webster, D. Glass

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

J. Duran, N. Cheung, D. Jakus, M. Ferrick

. . .

### 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 25 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 30.

—Letter from the Farm, from page 1

which to work.

Still, for most of us, trying to make ends meet on \$10.20 an hour might be a challenge. I'd pay more if I could. They pay Social Security, Medicare and federal and state income taxes, and qualify for Medicare and social security benefits. The Medinas work 60 hours a week (which is about what Jan and I work) from mid-April through mid-November, and then they take the winter off. There are no jobs at home, so they must live off their summer savings. During the winter they rest, participate in religious and family festivals, make good meals, hunt and fish, and play games. The Medinas are an intimate part of our CSA community. Their hands bunched your beets and trimmed your scallions. They built the simple greenhouses over your cucumbers and tomatoes. They take pride in making our farm succeed, and I'm very happy they're here.

Weather note: I heard on NBC News last week that, so far, this has been the coldest July in more than 100 years of recordkeeping. We haven't had a 90 degree day since April! Temperatures since June 1st, when we had our last frost, have averaged a full 10 degrees below normal, and nighttime temperatures have been in the low 50s. Early last week, overnight temperatures nearly

### BEET SALADS

from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the tops of the beets, leaving about 1/2 inch of stem. Wash the beets thoroughly and put them in a baking pan with a splash of water. Cover tightly with foil and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until they can be easily pierced through with a sharp knife. Uncover and allow to cool.

Peel the beets and cut off their tops and bottom tails. Cut them in halves or quarters, depending on their size; sprinkle generously with vinegar, and season with salt and pepper. Add a pinch of sugar if the beets are at all bitter. Do not add any oil until the beets

have sat for 1/2 hour and have had a good chance to absorb the flavor of the vinegar. The beets will never be as good if the oil is added too soon. The vinegar brightens and accentuates the beet flavor; the oil should be added sparingly, for balance only. Adjust the seasoning.

Prepared this way, beets are ready to be combined with other ingredients. Here are a few suggestions: Beets, sherry vinegar, orange zest, and tarragon. A tiny bit of crushed garlic is good too. . . . Beets, sherry or balsamic vinaigrette, blood orange sections, and arugula. . . . Chioggia beets, white wine vinegar, shallots, fennel, and watercress. . . . Beets, balsamic vinegar, shallots, and toasted walnuts.

### A SIMPLE VINAIGRETTE

from *Chez Panisse Vegetables* by Alice Waters

2 small shallots  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
4 tablespoons dijon mustard  
Salt and pepper

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

Peel and dice the shallots very fine, and put them in a small bowl with the mustard, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Stir and let the mixture sit for 10 minutes. Whisk in the olive oil.

### GREEN MASHED POTATOES

from Mark Bittman in the *New York Times*

2 large starchy or all-purpose potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters  
1 pound arugula or other greens, washed and trimmed of thick stems  
1/4 to 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup homemade bread crumbs  
Put potatoes in a large, deep pot and cover them with cold water. Add a large pinch of salt and bring to a boil. Cook until soft but not falling apart, 15 to 30 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain; meanwhile, add greens to water and cook for about 1

minute. Rinse under cold water. Drain well, then chop.

Heat oven to 400°F. Rice potatoes, run them through a food mill, or mash them with a fork or potato masher, adding enough olive oil to moisten them well. Mash in the greens, adding more olive oil as needed. Sprinkle with salt and lots of pepper.

Put mixture in an ovenproof dish and top with bread crumbs. Drizzle with more olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and bake until bread crumbs are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Serve hot or warm.  
Serves 4

set another record low. But then, late in the week, nearly a month late, summer arrived. Let's hope it stays for awhile. Corn, tomatoes, squashes, beans, peppers and eggplants—all crops that need warm temperatures—are maturing slowly, and will be as late to come as summer has been. In the meantime, it's more roots and greens and early alliums. The rains have spoiled quite a bit of our lettuce, but we should be back into the good stuff in a couple of weeks. We're also sending Chinese cabbage this week. Try this simple recipe: cut the cabbage into strips and add to a hot skillet with

a few tablespoons of rice wine or water. Add salt, turn occasionally while heating over a medium flame, and remove when wilted. Drain, toss with sesame or roasted peanut oil, garnish with cilantro, and serve.

*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).