



From Far Afield

A newsletter of the Tolstoy Farms CSA - June 28 & July 1, 2017

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A LARGE VARIETY OF vegetables in the box this week. Most you have seen in past weeks, but a few are new. You have two lettuces

for a full share or one large one for half share. We have various types of lettuce, which fall into a few categories: leaf, butter head, romaine, and Batavian (a.k.a. Summer Crisp).

- Leaf lettuces are generally frilly and loose centered, with leaves which tend to be soft on the upper portion, but crisper on the ribs and toward the core. We grow red and green leaf lettuces.
- Butterheads are soft leafed lettuces with heads which blanch out the inner leaves, making them soft and buttery. We grow both green and red butterheads.
- Romaine lettuces have firm

meaty leaves which are crisp and tend to be blanched and milder toward the center.

- Batavian (or Summer Crisp) lettuces tend to be large and heavy, with very crisp, crunchy leaves. They tend to bunch or head in the center when larger, making a sweet, succulent center. Hanson and Cardinal are our main Batavian varieties; Mottistone, a red and green speckled lettuce is considered such as well, though it could just as easily be categorized as a leaf variety. The type categorization for lettuces is a somewhat fluid and tenuous undertaking....

You have **arugula** this week. It is the bunch of oak leaf looking greens. Arugula has a spicy, peppery flavor and is very nice due to the fact that it can be used raw or with very little cooking. It adds a nice flavor to salads, or put on top of pizza. You can incorporate it into pasta sauces (either adding on top of pasta before topping with sauce, or by cooking very briefly in sauce), added to eggs, mixed with hot out of the oven roasted vegetables, used for a pesto, or put as a lettuce replacement on sandwiches.

You have a head of uncured garlic this week. This garlic is harvested fresh from the field and has not gone through the curing process which would dry down its outer wrappers and stem. Fresh garlic has thicker, moister peels, and is crunchy and juicy with a milder flavor than when cured. Fresh garlic is very favored by those who eat raw garlic. It does not require as much cooking as garlic which has been

cured and in long storage.

The garlic variety you have this week is Tashkant Violet Streak. This variety was gotten by a traveler at an Uzbek farmers' market and was subsequently given to a Montana farmer who grew it for 20 years before we acquired seed of it about 15 years ago.

Kale is used much like chard, but has a more broccoli/cabbage kind of flavor. These greens will be excellent in a stir-fry or soup, or steamed and served as a side dish with a splash of balsamic vinegar. Lately, kale chips have become popular. To make these chips, take your bunch of kale, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and 1 teaspoon sea salt (or flavored salt.) Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Line a non insulated cookie sheet with parchment paper. With a knife or kitchen shears carefully remove the leaves from the thick stems and tear into bite size pieces. Wash and thoroughly dry kale with a salad spinner. Drizzle kale with olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning salt. Bake until the edges brown but are not burnt, 10 to 15 minutes. You can also use a small amount of cayenne pepper or chili powder to season. Lots of people also like putting kale in green smoothies, a blended drink combining greens, fruit, and yogurt.

Greens in general can be easily and tastily incorporated into almost any dish: soups, stews, casseroles, sandwiches; even with breakfast: greens steamed with a rice or other savory grain porridge, or spinach cooked with eggs are sure to start your day right. And besides being delicious and adaptable, leafy greens are nutritional powerhouses, with very high levels of fiber, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and many other vitamins and minerals.

You have a small handful of

In Your Box

4 pints strawberries
1 head spinach
2 head lettuce
1 bunch turnips
1 bunch small carrots
1 bunch red beets
1/2 lb snap peas
1/4 lb snow peas
1 head garlic
1 kohlrabi
1 bunch garlic scapes
1 bunch arugula
1 bunch kale
1 bunch mustard greens
1 baby bok choy
1 bunch tarragon

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snow peas mixed with your snap peas this week. Snow peas are flatter than snaps, but like snaps are edible pod peas. They are favored highly for use in stir-fries and Asian cooking.

Tarragon is your herb; a description follows. Enjoy your vegetables.

Stir Fried Bok Choy with Roasted Peanuts

3 tablespoons raw peanuts
2 teaspoons roasted peanut oil
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Salt
1 bunch bok choy
2 tablespoon peanut oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with 3 tablespoons stock or water

Fry peanuts in 2 teaspoons roasted peanut oil until golden. Chop with the pepper flakes and a few teaspoons of salt and set aside. Slice bok choy stems into 1-inch pieces, leaving the leaves whole. Set wok over high heat. Add 2 tablespoons peanut oil and roll it around the sides. When hot add the garlic and ginger and stir fry for 1 minute. Add the bok choy leaves and a few pinches of salt and stir fry until wilted and glossy. Add the soy sauce and cornstarch and stir fry for one or two minutes more, until the leaves are shiny and glazed. Add crushed peanuts and serve with rice or noodles.

Kale with Pine Nuts and Raisins

1 bunch kale
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup raisins
Pinch ground cinnamon
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts
Sea salt or tamari to taste

Rinse kale thoroughly and cut off stems. Coarsely chop leaves, and set aside. In a large skillet or wok, heat the olive oil. Over medium-high heat sauté the garlic for 30 seconds.

Add the kale, water (watch for sputtering oil!) raisins, cinnamon, and salt to taste. Cover and continue to cook over medium-high heat, uncovering and stirring every minute or so, until the kale is tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Add a few more tablespoons of water if the kale becomes too dry or begins to scorch the bottom of the pot. Stir in the pine nuts and salt to taste before serving.

Tarragon Herb of the Week

Tarragon is native to the Caspian Sea area and Serbia. It is cultivated extensively in Europe, the U.S. and Asia. This variety is French Tarragon, which as its name implies is widely used in French cooking. In contrast to the other variety, Russian Tarragon, French tarragon has a milder, sweeter flavor, preferred absolutely culinarily. The bitterness which is predominant in Russian Tarragon is reminiscent of their close cousins, mugwort and wormwood. French Tarragon has an anise-like flavor which is commonly associated with flavored vinegar and fish. It is very well suited to both of these but has much wider culinary applications. Its flavor can dominate or clash with other herbs, and in general one should avoid using too heavy a hand in its application, as well as avoiding cooking it too long, which can bring out its bitter side. Use the leaves fresh in salads and as garnish. Tarragon enhances fish, shellfish, pork, beef, lamb, game, poultry, pates, leeks, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, artichokes, asparagus, mushrooms, broccoli, beets, peas, parsley, garlic, chives, lemon, oranges, rice, and barley. It is great in flavored vinegars, herbed mayonnaise, herbed butters, cream sauces, soups, and with cheese, eggs, sour cream, and yogurt. For best flavor in long cooking soups and stews, add tarragon during the last 15 minutes only. Create a fish salad by poaching salmon or had-dock, and combining it with feta cheese, pitted green olives, and fresh tarragon. Dress with a garlic vinaigrette. Or stuff tarragon and garlic slivers under the leg and breast skin of a chicken before you roast it. Though tarragon dries easily, its flavor is better if frozen or stored in vinegar.