



From Far Afield

A newsletter of the Tolstoy Farms CSA - June 8 & 11, 2015

32280 Mill Canyon Road N., Davenport, WA 99122 (509)725-FARM

tolstoyfarms1@gmail.com

www.tolstoyfarm.org

Welcome to our first box of the 2016 CSA season. A couple words for those who are new (or reminders to those who have been CSA members before):

~**We reuse CSA boxes.** In order to reduce waste, costs and hassles, **please return boxes to us for re-use.** Also try and be careful when opening the top of box or when unfolding bottom. The **box tabs tear easily**, especially on new boxes. To avoid this grasp panel with tabs and slide backwards to disengage tabs rather than pulling panel upward or wrenching panels apart. Joe or I can demonstrate this at the market. The new type of half share boxes are especially stiff. If you do not feel comfortable breaking them down, just bring them back in box form and we will deal with it. They are also especially expensive. We **need** them back.

~Due to full CSA rosters on both Wednesdays and Saturdays, and complications inherent to doing CSA boxes, **we cannot allow switching of pick-up days from one week to the next.** If you cannot pick up a box, you may have a relative, friend, neighbor or whomever you choose pick it up for you.

~**Any CSA boxes not picked up by the**

time we leave market (market ends at 1:00 p.m.) are donated to either the Downtown Women's Drop-in Center, St. Margaret's transitional shelter, or Second Harvest. ~**If you are picking up from Davenport Auto Parts, please pick up by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday.**

~**Any CSA member who has a recipe they feel others might like to use, please give us a copy to print in the newsletter.** We usually print recipes every week, and are greatly appreciative of any we receive.

Please email or post them to the above address, or bring a copy by the stand (e-mailing is best). Or post it on our facebook page. Recipes should include some type of regionally grown produce. Thanks to all who donated recipes last year... if you gave a recipe and never saw it in print, it is because we got it after the produce used in it was no longer in the boxes. We will use those recipes this year.

~**Speaking of Facebook, if you use this service check out our page and like us.** [Here](#) is a link if you are viewing this on your computer. Pictures of food you make with our produce make nice facebook posts, too.

~**CSA members receive 15% off any additional produce purchased** at our stand (not including special order or already discounted bulk items.) Please be sure to tell the cashier you are a CSA member to receive your discount.

~**"In Your Box" lists apply to full share CSA's; Half shares get roughly half of that.** Thus if list says 2, half's get 1; if list says one, half's get a smaller one.

~**For new CSA customers:** The boxes start a bit light with lots of greens and increase in volume, diversity and weight as the season commences... though with the first box this year the volume is full.

So onto your produce. This has been a remarkably early season for us. We have never picked **strawberries** this early in the year, nor have we ever had our first boxes packed so full. Each year as of late seems to be a bit earlier than the last. Luckily we have had a bit more spring rain, and it is not quite as hot as last year. If I recall correctly it was about a hundred degrees last year this time... today was merely low-90's. Last year through the month of June there

was zero measurable precipitation, the only time such has been recorded since 1922. Hopefully it is not as hot and dry this year.

This time of year we get lots of greens. This week you have two heads of **lettuce**. These are lettuce from our greenhouse and are quite large. Having a greenhouse is like having a slice of California in the garden, and things tend to get bigger faster. In addition to the large lovely lettuce, you have **spinach**. Spinach is a delicious and very nutritious green, high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C. It is delicious raw as a salad with a balsamic vinaigrette; sautéed in olive oil with garlic and pine nuts; steamed and served with a splash of vinegar; baked in casseroles or lasagna; used in light soups or heavy stews; or put in stir fries as the final ingredient. Spinach has such a vibrant taste and mouth-feel, especially this time of year. I eat some fresh-from-the-garden spinach this time of year, and I feel as though I'm sloughing off the last of the winter hibernation. Strawberries are great sliced into salads, or make a great vinaigrette.

Speaking of strawberries, since you have quite a few, here are a couple more suggestions:

- * Blend up with yogurt or soymilk and other fruits or vegetables to make a smoothie.
- * If you have too many to eat immediately, make jam or, even quicker, stem and mash or blend and then freeze in jars for a treat for using in winter cobblers, muffins, or smoothies.

You have a bunch of **garlic scapes**, the bunch of garlic smelling curlicues. These are from an early variety of garlic we grow called Tashkent Violet Streak or Uzbek. Scapes are the topsets which form on hardneck garlic plants. They can be chopped and used in soups and stir-fries just as you would use garlic. You can also eat it as a vegetable in its own right. Here's what I like to do with them: Chop off and discard the thin flat end on the pod end of the scapes... this becomes rather grass-like in its texture when cooked. Put a tablespoon or two of olive oil in a heavy skillet and heat over a medium-high flame. Add scapes and sauté until lightly browned. Add

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In Your Box

8 pints strawberries
2 head spinach (~1 1/2 lb.)
2 lettuce
1 bunch radish
1 bunch turnips
1 bunch Swiss chard
1 Chinese cabbage
1 bok choy
1 baby bok choy
1 bunch garlic scapes
1 bunch green onions
1 bunch arugula
1 bunch cilantro

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a couple tablespoons of water and a pinch of salt. Cover the pan and steam until tender, about ten minutes. Stir occasionally and add enough water to keep from sticking if necessary. Garlic scapes cooked this way have a flavor like garlicky asparagus. Another idea is to chop and sauté the scapes in butter before adding eggs to make an omelet.

The rainbow-colored greens are **Swiss chard**. Chard is a delicious, and like most greens, highly nutritious food, very high in Vitamins A, C, and B's; iron, calcium, and phosphorus. Chard is the same species as beet, bred for large, prolific leaf production rather than large, bulbous roots. The leaves are not as strongly flavored as beet greens. It is delicious sautéed, steamed, or used in soups or stews.

You also have a bunch of white **turnips**. Turnips are a vegetable which has a bad reputation amongst many due to their having eaten only large, bitter storage turnips, warehoused overly long and ill prepared. Let me beseech you: if such has been the extent of your experience, give these turnips a try. Fresh young turnips are a whole different experience from large storage turnips (think the difference between new baby potatoes and large, old russets bought at the grocery store.) Fresh turnips are crunchy, juicy and sweet, with a flavor like a cross between broccoli stems and mild radish. You may notice slight blemishes on some of the turnips. This is, once again, wireworm damage. Cabbage family crops, of which turnips are one, are especially susceptible. Pare out any damage and they are fine. You can use them fresh chopped or grated in salad. You can steam or sauté them briefly or use them in soups or stews. The greens are also quite delicious and nutritious, a top-rate green. Cook them as a potherb, or, again, added to soups or stews. A fellow here on the farm currently recently made turnip green chips (think kale chips) and was very pleased with the result.

The bunch of spiky, light green colored leaves are **mustard greens**. Mustard greens have a delicious peppery flavor, somewhat akin to horseradish. These greens are great cooked in olive oil or butter with garlic, added to a stew, or added onto a sandwich for a spicy "lettuce" leaf. They are also very good steamed in a mix with other greens. Mustard greens seem to be the number two green for folks from the south when collards are unavailable... for Southern-style greens cook them in bacon grease.

There are plenty of Asian greens in your box this week: **bok choy, baby bok choy, and Chinese Cabbage**. The latter, also known as Napa cabbage, has a crisp, crunchy texture and is lighter colored and more mild flavored than other cabbages. It is great in Asian slaws and stir-fries. The leaves may be used for stuffing (Chinese Cabbage rolls) or thinly sliced for use in spring rolls. Chinese cabbage is also used to make the wonderfully pungent condiment kimchi. This Korean pickle, made with green onions, garlic, hot peppers, ginger, and generally diakon radish (though I put in whatever roots I have available, such as turnip, radish, or carrot) is akin to a spicy Asian version of sauerkraut. Traditional kimchi can take several days or weeks to make. However, for a quick at-home version, combine a few cups of chopped Chinese cabbage, a tablespoon of sambal olek (an Eastern hot sauce), 3 tablespoons of rice wine vinegar, 4 sliced cloves of garlic, a small amount of finely grated ginger, and a healthy pinch of salt. Stir well, chill overnight and then eat right out of the bowl! You can also use Chinese cabbage in soups... it is especially good in lighter Asian soups. Chinese cabbage keeps for quite awhile. Store the unused portion in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper and trim off a thin slice of the exposed side if it has discolored before you use it.

Bok & baby bok choy are basically very mild, crunchy, sweet Asian cabbages, almost as though Chinese cabbage crossed with celery. They are used in Asian stir-fries and coleslaws. This is a very yummy green.

There is a bunch of rainbow colored **radishes** in your box. These, too, are very good in a salad. Radishes are cooked in many Asian cultures, as are the greens. You need nice, fresh radish greens to desire cooking them, and here you have them. You can use them in stir fries or soups. A description of the herb, peppermint, follows. Welcome to the 2015 season and thank you for supporting our farm. If you have any questions, concerns, problems, or comments during the season, please direct them to me, Tim, or to Joe, either at the stand or at the contacts listed in the masthead. Enjoy your produce.

Cilantro Herb of the Week

Cilantro is also known as Chinese parsley or coriander. In the US, "coriander" generally refers to the seeds while "cilantro" refers to the leaves. Cilantro has been cultivated for more than 3000 years, and coriander seeds have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs. Cilantro is used in Southeast Asian, Chinese, Mexican, East Indian, South American, Spanish, Central African, and Central American cuisines. The root is popular in Thai cooking. Cilantro is great in bean dishes, especially in chili and Mexican bean dishes. Use in fresh salsas and add a small amount to salad dressings. Mince & sprinkle on tacos, burritos, or as a garnish for chili. Laura, one of our farmers, loves using cilantro in Kim chee.

Southern-style Turnip Greens & Roots

- 1 bunch fresh turnip greens with roots
 - 1 medium piece salt pork
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons bacon drippings, butter, or margarine
- Pinch of sugar (optional)

Strip the stems from the greens (unless they're very tender) and wash thoroughly. Dice roots. Place in a saucepan and add the pork, water, and salt. Cook, covered, for 45 minutes over medium heat, or until tender. Remove the pork and pour the greens into a colander to drain. Place in a pan and chop scissor-like with two knives. If necessary, add more salt to taste. Keep hot and add the bacon drippings and a pinch of sugar.

Our Organic Promise

Our farm has been Certified Organic for about a quarter century. Before being certified, our community used and was dedicated to using organic methods for decades. The intentional community which our farm acreage is a part of has organic methods stipulated in its bylaws, and the land on which we farm has never had synthetic chemical inputs or applications. We are dedicated to having healthy, sustainable, productive farming without the use of synthetic chemical inputs. Whether as pesticides, fertilizers, seed treatments... we will farm without them. This is our promise to you. It is an easy promise for us to make, because for us this is not simply a means of production or a revenue stream; it is a way of life.