

FIELD *notes*

UCSC Farm
Community Supported Agriculture
Second Harvest: 6/22/10 & 6/25/10



What's in the box?

Cilantro, *Santo*
Pac Choi, *Black Summer*
Swiss Chard, *Bright Lights*
Red Leaf Lettuce, *Vulcan*
either Kale, *Red Ursa* OR Swiss Chard,
Bright Lights
Avocado
Strawberries, *Seascape and Albion mix*
Blueberries, *mixed varieties*

Upcoming Event

A Garden of Poetry and Music
Saturday, June 26, 12 noon - 2pm
Alan Chadwick Garden, UCSC

Set aside time for an afternoon in the Garden as we listen to the poems and tunes of the region's artists at this free event. Questions? Call 831.459-3240 or email casfs@ucsc.edu



Each year, the UCSC Farm program is host to a new group of apprentices who, as farmers and gardeners in training, take part in the responsibility of producing food for our CSA members. Their individual experiences and perspectives adds something fresh and new to the Farm year after year and are reflected in the writings, recipes and food facts found in the weekly newsletter. We hope you enjoy what they have to share.

Words from the Field

second-year apprentice, Tyson Neukirch

*Let me wake in the night
and hear it raining
and go back to sleep*

—Wendell Berry, *Farming: A Handbook*

Simple words, a farmer's incantation, but many were the nights this spring when I awoke to the rain and was troubled in returning to sleep. Part of my consciousness welcomed the rain, invited its bounty after three years of drought. Growing up on small farm in Nebraska, where rain was our only irrigation, waking in the night to its soft rhythm hitting the roof was a welcomed blessing, a reprieve. This year, as winter turned to spring and the nights of rain continued, I felt anxiety, quiet and deep, welling from within. The mix of bell beans, common vetch, and Cayuse oats that serve as the winter cover crop, protecting and enriching the soil of the farm, grew ever-taller, while in greenhouses, the seedlings we planted starting in February were doing the same. The soil was too wet to work—it was as simple as that. The act of mowing and incorporating the cover crop in preparation for planting would compact the soil and degrade its texture, negating decades of careful soil stewardship.

The days passed and the Red Winged blackbirds stayed longer than usual, perched and singing amidst the cover crop. The seedlings would have to wait, and so would we, to place our hands in the fertile earth. The anxiety was making me restless. Like a surfer waiting for the winter swell to return, I was waiting with diminishing patience for the rains to subside, caught between the desire to uphold the covenant to this land, the promise we had made to provide you and your fellow CSA members with the bounty. The rains would stop for a week, the soil would dry down just enough to think that we would be able to get into the fields, and the rain would return, puddling in the seats of tractors poised to enter the fields. (continues)

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Words from the Field (continued)

The rains stopped, the cover crop was cut and incorporated, the redwing blackbirds have moved on, making room for mockingbirds and robins, and the meadows that surround the farm are turning from green to gold. We are planting, tending, and harvesting. These are the true signs of spring, they do not adhere to the Gregorian calendar but to cycles of the seasons, cycles the moon, rhythms that we try as farmers to understand and work with, but sometimes we forget. In the end, the covenant to the land and the covenant to one's community are the same. Diminishing one, diminishes the other. Enriching one, enriches the other. Thank you for waiting with us for spring to come. Enjoy the bounty.

Swiss chard is a delightful green that is a good source of fiber and high in minerals and vitamins. The greens can be steamed, braised, sauted and stir fried. They can also be eaten raw and add beautiful color to a salad. Be sure to use the robust, watery stems which add a nice crunch to any greens dish.

Swiss Chard Stems Piquant

from *Fresh from the Farm & Garden cookbook Vol. 2*

2 cups sliced chard stems (greens removed) cut in 1/2-1-inch pieces
1 cup diced onion (white or yellow)
1 large clove garlic, smashed and minced
2 tablespoons
2-4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar to taste
1 tablespoon raw sugar
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Over medium heat, saute the onion in olive oil until translucent. Add garlic and cook another minute or two. Stir in chard stems and saute until they start to change color (3-5 minutes). Add vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper and reduce heat to low. Cover pan and cook for another 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until quite tender. Just before serving, remove lid and cook until almost all juice is absorbed. Serve hot or at room temperature—goes well with soft polenta.

Asian Vinaigrette with Cilantro

2 tablespoons rice vinegar
3 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes to taste
6-8 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
1 or more tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves
(according to taste)

In a small bowl, whisk vinegar and lemon juice, salt, cilantro and red pepper until salt dissolves. Slowly whisk in oil. Serve over lettuce and chard or kale leaves tossed with toasted sesame, pumpkin seeds or peanuts. Can also be served over rice noodles and sauted pac choi, swiss chard or kale.

Massaged Kale Salad

1 bunch kale
1 teaspoon sea salt
1/3 cup sunflower seeds, toasted
1/4 cup diced red onion
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons unfiltered apple cider vinegar
1/3 cup diced avocado

De-stem kale by pulling leaf away from the stem. Wash leaves. Spin or pat dry. Stack leaves, rollup and cut into thin ribbons (chiffonade). Put kale in a large mixing bowl. Add salt, massage salt into kale with your hands for 2 minutes. To toast seeds, put in a dry skillet over low to medium heat and stir constantly for a few minutes until they change color and give off a nutty aroma.

Put kale in a fresh bowl and discard any leftover liquid. Stir onion and toasted seeds into kale. Dress with oil and vinegar and toss. Taste for salt and vinegar, adding more if necessary. When at desired flavor, toss in avocado.

Preparation time 15 minutes
Makes 6 servings