

FRESH PROSPECTS

Week 3 – July 3, 2008

This Week:

- Recycling
- Safer Biking
- Core Issues
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- Not Swiss Chard
- News from Farmer Ted

Recycling

Thanks to everyone who returned used fruit and egg cartons. The farmers reuse them all.

Safer Biking

Biking your groceries home? Before you mount up, let the website www.ridethecity.com map the safest bike route for you.

Core Issues

The Core Group kicked up an email storm this past week, debating strategies and counter-strategies and counter-counter strategies for filling all the open shifts and herding in the members who haven't yet signed up. The stragglers are finding nothing but early shifts available because, no surprise, those have been the hardest to fill. Liz's CSA Work Shift Update represents the diplomatic conclusion of the debate. Thanks to everyone who kindly offered to switch to an earlier shift.

If you still haven't signed up for your work shifts—or would like to contribute a few more hours to making our all-volunteer CSA run smoothly—reserve your time slot via Local Fork.

Voice of Experience

Core member Vince offers a tip for weighing loose-leaf veggies, which otherwise tumble off the scale and onto the floor: bag them before you weigh them. Then weigh them in the bag. And if you're concerned the weight of the bag might cost you that extra leaf of chard, weigh the empty bag first and subtract. Thanks, Vince.

Not-Swiss Chard

Chard is actually Sicilian in origin. It's only called "Swiss" to distinguish it from French chard, which is more of a spinach. (Bless you, Wikipedia.) Chard is highly perishable,

so we're lucky to be getting it straight from the farm. Young chard, like the lot we got last week, is tender enough to eat raw in a salad. But in a mature crop, the stems get tougher and the leaves get more bitter—flaws easily remedied by cooking. To make a quick Sicilian side dish or pasta topping, just sauté chopped chard in olive oil with garlic and crushed red pepper. Or if you're hoping to impress, try this Provençal version:

Provençal Swiss Chard

1 bunch chard
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pinch dried rosemary, or (better still) 1 teaspoon chopped fresh
1 shallot, peeled and minced
1/3 cup raisins
2 tablespoons pine nuts
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

1. Swish the chard around in a deep bowl filled with water. Remove the leaves and cut out the stems and the thick spine. Chop the stems and spine into 3/4" lengths. Chop the leaves every 2". Keep separate.
2. In a big, heavy frying pan over medium high heat, melt the butter with the oil. Add the pine nuts, shallot, rosemary, and chard stems, stirring to cook evenly.
3. After a minute, add raisins and chard leaves. Continue cooking and stirring until the leaves have thoroughly wilted and the moisture is almost gone. The whole cooking time is about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and serve immediately.

News from Farmer Ted

"Tim, a yellow lab from the farm down the road, regularly rendezvous here with the white and brown mutt from next door. The black labs from the Harrington farm frequently amble by as they make their way to the Skiff place. And a neighbor's beagle visits regularly. Our farm is something of a canine crossroads.

Bob, the beagle, appears to have moved to the farm permanently. Jan keeps him tied to a tree, where he has shade and water, while she waits for the owners to pick him up. But they don't come.

He's very friendly. Sometimes Tim and Bob run together, like kids at play. Tim tackles the slower dog when he catches him, sending him rolling in the grass. Jan chases the beagle, too—out of the greenhouse, out of the barn, out of the kitchen—throwing rotten vegetables she's stored by the back door for the purpose. She's annoyed with him because he chases our cat and eats her food, and he tramples our plants. Bob also barks incessantly, howling all night, probably explaining why our neighbors refuse to keep him home.

So, Bob has been given a farm job. He, along with his food dish and water bowl, will be relocated to the lettuce field at night and placed in charge of the deer guard. During the day he will have the companionship of the farm staff, and at night he'll earn his keep by

using his one talent to prevent the deer and rabbits from eating our vegetables. Jan's only reservation is that the coyotes might find him and that he'd be helpless to defend himself because of his leash, but I think his howling will keep them away, too. Now, if we can only catch him again.

This week's share consist of more Hakurei turnips, the season's first red beets, a head of lettuce, Swiss chard, bok choy, bunched purple basil, scallions, and a salad mix, consisting of assorted teenage lettuces and mustards. My favorite way to have beets is to boil them, peel them, and stick them in the fridge. I slice them and eat them cold."

UNTIL NEXT WEEK, we wish you all happy veggie eating. . .