

FRESH PROSPECTS

Week 4 – July 10, 2008

This Week:

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The next Lewis Waite delivery is scheduled for 7/31. Place your orders by 7/26 at their new web site <http://www.csalewiswaitefarm.com>.

Just Food's CSA in NYC Email List

Stay on top of news affecting local farmers and CSAs by subscribing to free updates from Just Food, the non-profit organization that helps coordinate the city's CSAs. They send out weekly newsletters with info on regional food and agricultural events, policy updates, and a "Did You Know?" segment to help CSA members learn more about what it takes to farm for a CSA in New York City. Email paula@justfood.org to join the list.

Bed Stuy Youthmarket

If you need to supplement your CSA share with additional produce, check out the Bed Stuy Youthmarket. This is no ordinary greenmarket; it's run by teens committed to supporting family farmers while improving community access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In exchange, they receive specialized training on nutritional education, marketing, management, business development, and operations.

Visit the Youthmarket Saturdays (through November) on Lewis Avenue between Macdonough and Decatur Avenues.

Brooklyn Dining in the *Times*

Love him or hate him, Alan Harding is the one individual who has done more to change the Brooklyn dining scene than any other chef or restaurateur. The proprietor of such hits and flops as Patois, Gowanus Yacht Club, and Uncle Pho talks about cheap rent, cooking with orange soda, and future plans in and around our fair borough.

"With a trunk full of cod, brisket, blackberries, arugula and antifreeze, Alan Harding drives down Smith Street, past American Apparel, past the Michelin-starred restaurant Saul and past Patois, the bistro he helped open 11 years ago.

Back then the neighborhood was a more likely destination for drug deals than dinner. Patois, where he was the chef, is often credited with seeding the culinary flowering of Brooklyn. Does he ever quietly congratulate himself and say, "Hey, I made this street?"

Read the rest of the story at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/09/dining/09brook.html?pagewanted=1& r=2>

Bok Choy

Bok choy, cabbage's Chinese cousin, has been cultivated for over 6,000 years. It's milder than cabbage, with a refreshing, juicy crunch, though the leaves of more mature specimens can give off a mustardy bite.

Young plants can be eaten raw in salads. Quick cooking—by sauté, stir fry, or steaming—keeps bok choy from taking on a soggy consistency.

Stir Fried Chinese Cabbage

The Key to Chinese Cooking by Irene Kuo

Serves 2 to 4

1 ½ pounds Chinese cabbage
1 tablespoon oil
Pinch baking soda
2 or 3 quarter-sized slices peeled ginger
3 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
¼ teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons sesame oil (options)

Separate the white stalks of the cabbage and wash well. Trim the uneven ends and then cut them diagonally into pieces 1 inch thick and about 2 inches long. Bring 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan with 1 tablespoon oil; toss a generous pinch of baking soda in the water and swish to dissolve it. Shower in the cabbage. When the green brightens, in about 30 seconds, pour water and vegetable immediately into a colander to drain. Spray with cold water to stop the cooking if parboiling in advance.

Heat a wok or large, heavy skillet over high heat until hot; add the oil, swirl, and heat for a second. Throw in the pieces of ginger and press them around the pan. Add the cabbage and toss vigorously for 30 seconds. Add the salt and sugar and stir rapidly for 2 minutes, until the cabbage has an overall translucent look and is tender, plump, and slightly crunch. Add the sesame oil if you like a nutty aroma, give the contents a few fast folds, and pour into a hot serving dish.

Stir Fried Baby Bok Choy

epicurious

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/STIR-FRIED-BABY-BOK-CHOY-WITH-GARLIC-240548>

Stir Fried Tofu with Bok Choy

Food and Wine

<http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/stir-fried-tofu-with-bok-choy>

Beautiful Bok Choy

Story and recipe for "Bok Choy with Green Curry Paste" from the *Seattle Times*
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/pacificnw/2004454778_pacificptaste08.html

News from Farmer Ted

In this week's dispatch, our farmer takes his suspect muskmelon seeds to an expert, who confirms his worst suspicions. The seeds are carriers of the dreaded black rot, which has killed thousands of the farm's cucumber, zucchini, and winter squash plants. Ted's calm, collected summation: "Farming is not for the faint of heart."

"A small drama has been playing out over the last several weeks here. It involves the family Cucurbitaceae, which is comprised of some of the CSA farmers' most valued vegetables: zucchini and yellow squash, cucumber, muskmelon and watermelon, pumpkin, the great variety of winter squashes and gourds, and such lesser known vegetables as bitter melon and luffa, from which the sponge is derived. It turns out that all of these vegetables are susceptible to a disease called black rot, which is caused by an especially noxious fungal pathogen.

Black rot arrived on our farm on the seed coat of an heirloom muskmelon purchased from a small organic seed producer in Vermont. We know this because a Cornell pathologist at the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station cultured the fungus for us, confirming our diagnosis. Our county agent informs us that black rot is a disease without a cure. From the muskmelon seedlings the fungal spores spread on the feet of insects, in the splashing of water from our hoses, and in the movement of air in our ventilated greenhouse to every cucurbit we were growing at the time.

Our earliest cucumbers, zucchinis and summer squashes, the plants that produced some of this week's share, weren't badly impacted by the disease because they were being moved out of the greenhouse at about the time the muskmelon seedlings were beginning to develop. (Please note that plant pathogens are not human pathogens. These vegetables cannot make you sick any more than you can give your cold to a tomato. When people become sick eating produce, as has been in the news lately, it is nearly always because the produce came in contact with unsanitary water and the human pathogens *E. coli* or *Salmonella* contaminated the outside of the produce.)

The second planting of cukes and zukes, however, were ruined, as were all our melons and winter squashes. Thousands of plants, representing thousands of dollars in seeds, soil mix, greenhouse space and time, were lost. Farming is not for the faint of heart. This was all taking place just as we were planning our first CSA delivery four weeks ago. At that time we set up a temporary greenhouse in an isolated spot near the barn and started seeding all over again. Last week we transplanted the first of those new seedlings into the field. I don't know much about the epidemiology of black rot, so I can't predict how it will spread, but we have planted the most down-wind portions of the farm first, hoping that will slow the progression of the disease. So far, they look good. We'll keep you posted.

Today's share consists of our first zucchini squashes and cucumbers, lettuce, bok choy and other cooking greens, garlic scapes, broccoli (hurray!), and purple top turnips.

The dates for our open house on the farm are August 23-24, the final weekend of the Washington County Fair, and October 11-12, Columbus Day Weekend and the peak of fall colors here."

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