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Box #3 **Odd Week**
Newsletter #3
9 July 2014

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Nasturtium Plant - Alaska
Garlic, Fresh
Garlic Scapes
Kale: Green Curly
Lettuce: Boston, Romaine
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New Stuff: nasturtium, fresh garlic, kale, sunflower greens.

Nasturtiums are a flower I've grown so long I can hardly remember a time when it wasn't in my garden. It's beautiful—the flowers have vibrant colors that seem to glow from within—has unusual, round, green-and-cream leaves, and the best part is: it's all edible. Both flowers and leaves have a peppery flavor that makes your mouth say "Wow!" This particular cultivar grows to about 6"-8" high and spreads a little wider. Plant it in sun to part sun, keep it watered and fertilize now and again. Your nasturtium will reward you with lots of gorgeous blooms that you can pick for bouquets, use as an edible garnish, or in salads for a peppery kick.

Fresh garlic is moister and milder in flavor compared to what you're used to: its drier self. You should still peel the outer covering off of each clove, as it's rather fibrous. Due to the extra moisture, the clove will likely squirt when you smash it, so aim away from your eyes. Store fresh garlic just like you do the dried: in a dry, airy spot in your kitchen, out of direct sunlight. It'll slowly dry by itself, increasing in flavor as the moisture evaporates. Remove the stem/leaves, and use them to flavor a pot of stock.

Kale is highly nutritious, loaded with vitamins A, B, C, calcium and many minerals, and has the highest protein content of any cultivated vegetable. It keeps for a long time in the fridge, but you'll get the most nutrition from it if you use it soon, and eat it raw. Check online for a "green drink" or smoothie incorporating kale.

Kale will stay hydrated best inside a plastic bag with just a little water on it. To prepare kale, cut out most of the center rib (rather fibrous), then chop up as your recipe indicates. Depending on the size of the pieces, kale will cook in 10-20 minutes. You want it soft, just a little chewy but still green in color.

We grow 4 kinds of kale: green curly (the most common), lacinato/dinosaur, red Russian and white Russian. The curly kale tends to be a bit on the bitter side (good for the heart). If a little bitterness is not to your taste, moderate that flavor by blanching the leaves in boiling water for 2 minutes, then proceed with whatever recipe you wish. Marinating kale, as in the recipe below, also makes the flavor milder. Frost tends to sweeten the taste of kale, or, in the case of the curly ones, make it less bitter. Young kale leaves are much sweeter and milder than older ones.

Abigail and Arthur's Kale Salad *Serves 4*

1 large bunch kale, center ribs removed, leaves cut into thin strips (chiffonade)

1 shallot, sliced thin, or 2 Tbsp. leeks, sliced thin

1 1/2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice

3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 small clove garlic, minced (optional)

1/2 tsp. Kosher salt + more

1/3 cup pine nuts or chopped walnuts, toasted

1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese

1/2 cup small dill sprigs (optional)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

About 2 hours before you plan to eat, put kale and shallot (or leeks) in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, and 1/2 tsp. salt. Pour the dressing over the kale and toss to coat thoroughly. Let sit for one hour (or more).

To serve, add toasted nuts, feta cheese, and dill sprigs to salad and toss thoroughly. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Kale Chips

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cut out the stems & center veins of a large bunch of kale. Chop the kale roughly into 1"-1 1/2" pieces, wash and spin them as dry as you can. (You may have to do that step in batches.)

In a large bowl, stir together:

2 Tbsp. olive oil

Kosher salt or sea salt

freshly ground pepper

Toss the kale pieces in the mixture until all are coated. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Spread the kale out on the baking sheet as evenly as possible. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the leaves are very crispy. They will shrink some. Remove from oven, cool for 10 minutes, and enjoy.

Sunflower greens are a “living” food, and especially good for you. They have a sweet, nutty flavor. We sprouted these in a warm, dark germination chamber, hence their yellow-green color. Before you enjoy these, you need to do a few things to finish them off. First, place the container in a shallow plate—something that will catch water. Then, give them some water, about ¼ to ½ cup, and place them in a sunny location. Gently pull or brush off the split seed shell at the end of the cotyledons (those leaf-like things that appear first when a seed sprouts). Leave the plants in the window for a day or 3 so they can continue to grow and turn a nice green. For best flavor, harvest before true leaves emerge in the center of the plant. To harvest, snip the stems, just above the soil level. Rinse them off, and you’re ready to eat. Many of our members put the greens on sandwiches or in salads. If you like, you can take a few plants outside and let them grow into sunflowers. Wait until they have their 2nd set of true leaves before you plant them.

The lettuce in your box this week will have some damage from earlier, heavy rains. Use the outer leaves soon, and the rest of the head should keep a little longer.

Altho many of these radishes were buried in the weeds, they still grew pretty well. Don’t worry if you get one that’s split: the rain did it. As long as the globe is firm and white, it’s fine to eat. If you like a peppery kick in your salads, add radish leaves to it. Wash them thoroughly, chop and toss.

Field Notes

Monday night into Tuesday morning we had even more rain, about ¾”. Altho regular rain nourishes plants and helps them grow, it also provides a nice environment for fungus and rot. When we had those heavy, heavy rains that damaged leaves on our lettuce, chard and spinach, the tears in those leaves turned brown and broke down. The rest of the leaf may be perfectly fine, but you should remove any part of the leaf that has become brown. It can stop raining for a while.

The garlic field is yielding some very nice-looking bulbs. We’ll be harvesting this field in a few weeks, and letting the garlic dry in our greenhouse. Expect more garlic in future boxes.

The crew reports that the zucchini plants have finally started to produce fruit in larger quantities. If things go as planned, we should be able to give you more than one zucchini in next week’s box.

New next week: cucumbers. We have harvested our first ones, and hope to put them into next week’s box. Quantities may be small at first.

It’s vacation season, and some of you will be gone one week you’re getting a box. We recommend you arrange for a family member or friend to use your box at that time. When you do this, please give them specific instructions on which sized box they’re picking up, where it’s located, and how to double-check this on the sign-in sheet. Also, email your site manager with the name and phone number of the person who will be picking up your box. If there’s any question or problem, then your manager can contact your substitute. Thank you!

When you come to your pickup site this week, bring your wax box with you and leave it in the holder or space provided. If you have a container or bags of your own, you can fill these with the contents of your box and leave it at your pickup site. Please unfold it first. Thanks!

We hope you all had a wonderful holiday weekend, filled with fine food and fireworks.

Take Care,

Terry & Chuck