



Community Cultivator

Newsletter of the Foggy River Farm CSA, Week 6

Bring on the heat

Yikes, it's hot out there!

There's a saying in farming: "Heat makes sweet." The more heat we get, the faster those tomatoes and peppers can ripen and develop their signature sugars. Our cherry tomato plants are now on the verge of breaking out with fruits. We caught the first glimpses of yellow and orange yesterday as we were out tying up the gangly plants to their metal stakes. Each year, we get the same mixture of joy and excitement when we see the first color decorating our tomato vines. And with a little luck the larger tomato varieties won't be far behind. So, when you're wiping sweat from your brow on these hot days, just think of all those sweet tomatoes in your future.

It also might be said, though, that heat makes bitter. Or heat makes spicy. All of these are true, depending on which plants we're thinking of. Part of a farmer's job is to always be thinking from the perspective of the vegetables under his or her care. While a tomato will react to a hot spell by ripening sweet fruits, making them delicious and attractive for critters (whether they be four-legged raccoons or two-legged CSA members) to eat them and disperse the seeds far and wide...other plants have different goals. Lettuces and other greens can get bitter on a hot spell—a mechanism that tells those same hungry critters: "stay away from me! I'm not so tasty anymore." The hot weather cues the lettuce to send up a flower stalk and produce seeds, because it's delicate leaves don't stand a great chance of prolonged survival under the scorching sun.

Other plants feel the heat and turn it into spice. Again, these are plants that want to prevent animals from biting into them, so that they can produce flowers and seeds. These vegetables—radishes, arugula, onions—are typically more mild when eaten in the winter and become increasingly spicy as the hot, dry weather of summer stresses them. We've just finished harvesting the majority of one classically spicy bulb: garlic. Garlic has an interesting lifecycle. In a nutshell, you take one *clove* of garlic and plant it in the fall to produce one mature *head* of garlic in the late spring. By keeping the plant happy with water and a rich mulch, you can grow big healthy greens which then provide the nutrients to feed the bulb come springtime. The heat and dry weather of summer spell imminent death to the garlic, so—in a heroic effort at self-preservation—the plant sends energy from its leaves down into its cloves (which are its seeds.) When the process is complete, we're left with sad withered leaves, but a perfectly preserved and long-lasting genetic copy of the parent plant... which also happens to be tasty to eat! This week, in lieu of garlic heads, you get to try another round of the garlic "scapes," which are sent up by certain garlic varieties during their maturation process. Enjoy!

Your Foggy Farmers,
Emmett & Lynda
Craig & Emma

Quick Announcements:

- 1)** **Veggie field tours at 4:30, 5:30, and 6:30 tomorrow.** These will go for about 30 minutes. We'll walk through many of our veggie fields, so you can see what's on the way and ask any questions you might have.
- 2)** **For those picking up boxes in Healdsburg or CST, please return your empty box this week** so that we can cycle it back in for the following week. Thanks!
- 3)** **Please return yogurt jars when you're finished with them.** There is a \$1 jar deposit when you buy yogurt, but if you return the jar then you only have to pay the deposit the first time and then can get it back at the end of the year. Thanks!

What's In Your Box:

- **Sweet Peas (Sugar Snap and/or Oregon Giant Snow)** *This little “snack pack” of peas is excellent for munching. Kids love them!*
- **Cauliflower (Snow Crown)** *More tasty cauliflower. The purple tinge and opening heads on some of these heads results from sun exposure; it doesn’t affect the flavor but makes for a beautiful coral-like head. Many people aren’t big cauliflower fans until they eat roasted cauliflower. (Recipe included.)*
- **Broccoli (Arcadia or Belstar)** *Another round of broccoli. If you see some purple or pink on your head, this is a result of the heat we’ve been having and does not adversely affect the flavor or cooking. Chop them up and steam them or stir-fry them. Add them to a pasta primavera dish. (Recipe included.)*
- **Turnips (Purple Top Globe)** *Turnips can be roasted, sliced thinly into a fresh salad like a radish, or added to a chunky or creamy soup. The greens can be cooked like mustard greens. (Recipe included.)*
- **Summer Squash (various)** *Just a little bit of the first summer fruits from our squash rows. Try chopping and adding to a pasta primavera with other veggies, such as chopped peas, broccoli, and chard. (Recipe included.)*
- **Chard (Bright Lights)** *This colorful mix of swiss chard varieties can be fixed in a variety of ways. The simplest way is to shred it finely (perpendicular to the stalk), sauté some garlic in oil, and then quickly sauté the chard with some lemon juice and salt and pepper. Put a lid over it for the end to steam the leaves and make tender.*
- **Head Lettuce (Red Cross / Bergam’s Green / Speckled)** *Enjoy more fresh green and red salads.*
- **Garlic Scapes** *These wild and crazy curly-cues are the false flower shoots sent up by some garlic varieties. They need to be cut off in order for the garlic to mature properly, and lucky for us they are a tasty by-product. We like to think of them as sort of a garlicky green bean. Try them as “garlic fries.” (Recipe included.)*
- **Fresh Herb Fennel:** *An excellent flavoring, fennel works well with roasted roots and cauliflower, in soups, or even chopped finely into a fresh salad. This fennel is particularly small because the scorching heat is not its cup of tea, so it needs to be enjoyed before it tries to send up flower stalks.*

Foggy River Recipes

Garlic "Fries"

A mini snack that will make your lips smack. Cook this up as a little appetizer while you're preparing the main meal.

Ingredients

Garlic scapes

Light olive oil

Salt

Chop the scape stems into 1-2 inch sections (leaving the flower buds out.) Heat several tablespoons of oil in a pan. Once hot, add the scapes and sprinkle salt generously on top. Sautee until the scapes have shriveled some and browned. They will be soft, garlicky and salty. We like to call them garlic fries.

Roasting Medley

Combine these three ingredients from this week's CSA share on the roasting pan to make a unique and delicious blend of flavors.

Ingredients

1 medium head **Cauliflower**, cut into bite-sized florets (you can include as much of the stem as possible)

1 bunch **Turnips**, diced

1 small **Fennel** bulb, chopped

(And any other roots or potatoes if you have them on hand...)

Light olive oil

Salt and pepper

Heat the oven to 375 F.

Spread the chopped cauliflower, turnips and fennel (and any other roots you want to add) on a baking sheet or dish. Sprinkle oil lightly over the top. Toss the vegetables with clean hands to coat evenly with oil. Shake salt and pepper over the top, to taste (don't be shy on the salt.)

Slide the pan into the hot oven. Check after 20-30 minutes, mixing the vegetables with a metal spatula. Continue to check every 10-15 minutes, mix them if they are browning on bottom. They are finished when they are soft and lightly browned. Cool and enjoy!

Pasta Primavera

This is a simple, clean, and tasty option for any time you have a bunch of seemingly random spring/summer vegetables and want to throw them together into a quick meal. I've included mostly ingredients from this week's share, but you can add anything that strikes you fancy if you make this on a future week as well (onions, carrots, peppers, tomatoes, etc.)

Ingredients

Garlic, minced

Broccoli, broken into bite-sized florets

Snow Peas, chopped

Summer squash, chopped

Chard, a few leaves finely chopped

Light olive oil

Salt and pepper

Pasta of choice

Bring water to a boil, salt it, and add pasta to cook.

While the pasta is cooking, saute garlic in oil, adding the summer squash and broccoli once the garlic is soft. A minute or two later, add the peas. (If adding carrots, you'd want to add them first because they'll take a bit longer to cook and you don't want the other vegetables to be overcooked.) If adding greens, such as chard, you'll want to add them in during the last minute or two of cooking. Season with salt and pepper and any other spices you choose.

Once the vegetables are soft—but not mushy!—remove them from the heat. Combine with the pasta, mix and enjoy. Voilá, pasta primavera.