



In Your Box

- Salad Mix*
- Red Leaf Lettuce*
- Red Scallions*
- Garlic Greens
- Belgian Endive
- Broccoli Raab
- Rose Gold New Potatoes
- Cilantro
- Peppermint*

*starred items in this box indicate their inclusion in the salad share.

Water

I grew up in Seattle, where water was a way of life. It surrounded the city and fell from the sky.

We mostly ignored it, unless we were actively trying to discourage people from moving to the area. Then we exaggerated it. But even when the clouds cleared, it was the view of frozen water on the mountains that took our breath away.

It wasn't until I began farming that water became a matter of survival. My first garden was two acres of vegetable in the high desert

along the California and Nevada. There, we didn't wait for water, we just pumped it furiously from the aquifer below our valley. It rained three times in the two years I was there.

My first summer in the Midwest I worked on the Potato Breeding Station in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. I quickly became the head irrigator, maintaining miles of four-inch aluminum pipe in twenty foot lengths, getting up at two in the morning to turn on the traveling irrigation gun.

The following year, 1993, I signed on at Harmony Valley Farm in Wisconsin, a large organic vegetable farm. I started with an extra fifty cents an hour wage to account for my irrigation experience. It rained the entire summer. The Mississippi flooded. Richard de Wilde, my boss, threatened to garnish my wages if I didn't stop doing such a good job of keeping things wet.

Our first year at Rock Spring Farm, after hand-watering some 2000 transplants, Kim and I ordered an irrigation system. The day it arrived we received three inches of rain. A week later we received another three inches, the beaver dam washed away, and our fields stood under water. A neighbor stopped by to ask me to turn it off.

I couldn't help giggling today when I turned on the drip irrigation system in the greenhouse, where we had transplanted cucumbers into bone-dry soil, while the rain slapped against the plastic covering.

Weed and Feed

You're invited to the first annual Weed and Feed at Rock Spring Farm, this Sunday, June 13, from eleven on into the evening.

All the rain in May (and now in June) has put us a little behind on the weeds here at Rock Spring Farm, so we've decided to have a party. This Sunday, at eleven o'clock, we'll host the first annual Weed and Feed, a celebration of food, beverage, and a little bit of weed killing.

First, the Weed. Starting at eleven, we'll spend three hours with a variety of fascinating hand tools (and our hands) putting the farm in order. We have a great collection of hoes and other weeding tools, so it could be a great learning opportunity as well as a lot of fun. Bring gloves if you have them; otherwise, we've got a few pairs scattered around that you can use.

Next, the Feed. At two, we'll break out the food and the beer. Bring your own utensils, but we'll supply all the consumables. The snap peas might even be ready!

At five, we'll light the bonfire, and everyone's welcome to stay into the evening.

Directions and a map available at: www.rsfarm.com/Farm/map_to_farm.html

Weather: We could simply note that we observed two ducks swimming on top of our third carrot crop this morning, or we could brag about the 4-1/2 inches of rain we received between nine Tuesday night and five Wednesday morning. That's a lot of water! Although we noted some erosion, even on the flat fields, our filter strips and water retention swales appear to have stopped any moving soil, and hopefully helped more water to infiltrate into the subsoil.

Activities on the Farm: We seeded the fifth crop of carrots on Saturday, as well as more salad mix and beets. Flowers, peppers, and eggplants were set out in a transplanting marathon on Monday, melons and tomatoes on Tuesday. Chris did field tillage in the upper fields to prepare for the transplanted squash crop, until the rain and lightning forced him off the ridge. We took advantage of the wet soil conditions to pull some deep-rooted thistles out of the field; in the sloppy soil, the roots just slip right out.

Breaking News: I have just returned from watching a snapping turtle swimming through the aforementioned carrot patch.

Comings and Goings: Our third picker, Clara, started work on Monday, filling out our crew through July, when she leaves for a farm internship in New Mexico.

Next Week's Box may include: Spinruts (spring turnips), radishes, snap peas, scallions, and more...

The Farm Kitchen

Broccoli Raab, the leafy green with small, broccoli-like florets, is more closely related to turnips than to broccoli. An aggressively flavored green, broccoli raab (also known as rapini and brccoletti) adds zest to bland foods such as pasta and potatoes, and holds its own with more robust flavors like chili and garlic.

Broccoli Raab with Pasta

- 1 bunch broccoli raab
- 2 large or 4 small garlic greens, chopped
- red pepper flakes to taste
- 1-1/2 C. water
- 4 Tbsp olive oil
- salt
- 10 oz pasta, cooked

Sauté garlic and red pepper flakes in a small amount of oil, adding water when garlic just begins to brown. Bring to a boil and add the broccoli raab, then cook until water is almost gone, 10 or 15 minutes. If the broccoli raab needs to cook longer, add a small amount of additional water. When the broccoli raab is cooked to your taste and the water is all boiled away (easier than it sounds), add the olive oil and salt to taste. Then toss with the pasta and enjoy.

We harvested the **red leaf lettuce** Wednesday morning, after Tuesday night's drubbing rains. The leaves have been damaged slightly from the velocity and the quantity of the raindrops, but should be fine for several days. Use this lettuce sooner rather than later.

We enjoy growing **peppermint**, especially because of the cookie recipe that follows. The peppermint plants we have now come from stock we originally grew on Mt. Desert Island in Maine; this is its third farm. It has a growth habit somewhat like quack grass, spreading through underground rhizomes and taking over whatever it can. Harvesting leaves the whole herb garden smelling of mint. The flavor compounds in mint, as with many herbs, are held in small oil "bubbles" atop microscopic hairs on the leaves; rubbing against the mint causes these bubbles to burst, releasing the mint oil into the air. For this reason, we do not wash fresh herbs unless absolutely necessary.

The name mint, according to Greek legend, is derived from the beautiful water nymph, Minth, with whom Hades had an illicit affair. When Hades' wife, Persephone, found out, she took revenge not on Hades, but on the mistress. The goddess of the Underworld began to step on Minthe, kicked her furiously, and turned her into a lowly, creeping plant. Unable to undo the spell, Hades softened the transformation by giving Minthe a sweet scent, which would perfume the air whenever her leaves were stepped upon.

Chocolate Chip Mint Cookies

- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 bunch fresh peppermint, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups white flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350 and lightly grease a cookie sheet. Cream together butter and sugars with an electric mixer at high speed. Beat in the egg. Stir in vanilla and peppermint. Sift together the dry ingredients, and add this to the butter mixture along with the chocolate chips. Stir until well combined. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake 12 to 15 minutes at 350. Remove from the sheet immediately after baking, and cool on a rack.

Red scallions can be used just as you would green scallions. We just figure, if we're going to grow something like scallions, we may as well have a little fun at it.

This week's **Belgian endive** is the last of the 2003 harvest on our farm: the roots, harvested in October, were stored until early May, when we brought them into the basement and placed them in total darkness. The resulting creamy white sprouts are known as Belgian endive. Some of this week's heads are looser than you would find in the grocery store, but taste just the same as a tight, specimen chicon. Add them to salad, or use the individual leaves to scoop olive paste or pesto.

Cilantro, a frequent ingredient in salsas, makes a great "cooling" herb. We especially enjoy it in chicken salad, or in the following recipe with new potatoes.

Potatoes with Cilantro and Garlic-Lime Butter

- 1 lb new potatoes, washed and quartered
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 garlic greens, minced
- 3 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
- sea salt
- fresh ground pepper
- 1 tsp paprika

Cover the potatoes with cold salted water and bring to a boil. Simmer until fork tender. Melt the butter with the garlic and the lime juice. Drain the potatoes and toss with garlic-lime butter. Toss more as you add cilantro, salt, pepper, and paprika. Great served warm or cold.

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