

# In Kim's Kitchen

Our fields presented us with an abundance of tender, toothsome **Salad Mix** this week, and we harvested it with abandon. It seems like we've got good salad-eating weather coming up next week, and we hope you'll enjoy it as much as we plan to.

The first major harvest of **Round Red Tomatoes** came to fruition in the greenhouse this week. The greenhouses give us a little bit of a jump on the season, but the real reason for growing tomatoes indoors has to do with avoiding disease pressure. In the greenhouse, it never rains, so the soil never splashes up on the leaves and we never get leaf-destroying blight. It takes sunshine to make tomatoes taste great, and our plants have six full feet of healthy, vigorous leaves pumping sunshine into your fruits—except the **Sungold Cherry Tomatoes**, which have already reached the rafters at a height of nine feet. Have I mentioned that, unlike most greenhouse producers, we grow our tomatoes and **Dutch Greenhouse Cucumbers** in **real soil**, loaded with real minerals and real soil life, which also helps pump your tomatoes and cucumbers full of flavor?

## Dutch Cucumber Black -Eyed Peas Salad

*We used to put a lot of time and effort into using dried beans in our cooking, but we have found that sourcing good quality dried beans is just about impossible, so we have gone over to canned beans for almost all of our beans (except fresh beans, of course).*

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary, or other herb  
Freshly ground pepper to taste  
4 cups peeled and diced cucumbers  
1 14-ounce can black-eyed peas, rinsed  
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese  
1/4 cup slivered red onion  
2 tablespoons chopped black olives  
Salad mix

Whisk oil, lemon juice, fresh rosemary in a large bowl until combined. Add cucumber, black-eyed peas, bell pepper, feta, onion and olives; toss to coat. Serve over salad mix, or other lettuce.

The **Rosemary** plants in the greenhouse and outdoors have been loving the hot, sultry weather. They seem to think they have died and gone to the Mediterranean! The fragrant, needle-like leaves provide great flavor to meats and vegetables all summer and winter. As with many other herbs, rosemary is a member of the mint family; contemplating that, we put it to work in lemonade:

## Rosemary Lemonade

1/2 cup honey plus 1 cup hot water  
1 cup lemon juice  
4 cups water  
4 Tbsp fresh rosemary  
Mix all and let steep, for 1 hour in fridge. Serve over ice with lemon wedges.

We also enjoyed this rosemary glaze served over a pork tenderloin on Tuesday night. It would work equally well over just about any cut of pork or chicken.

## Rosemary Orange Glaze

We enjoyed this on a pork tenderloin Tuesday night, but it would work equally well on other cuts of pork or chicken.  
1/4 cup frozen concentrate orange juice  
1 Tbsp brown sugar  
2 tsp chopped rosemary

Simmer ingredients together until the juice concentrate is reduced by half. Baste on meat prior to grilling or broiling.

The **Fresh Rocambole Garlic** is still hanging in the barn and drying down, but we can't resist breaking into the supply to get it on your table now. Continue to treat this as a "green" vegetable, and store it in the refrigerator in a plastic sack.

Each year, we plant several rows of red onions for fresh harvest, because they peel up so prettily for the stand or the box. **Fresh Red Onions** have less sulfur relative to the water and sugar in them, so they have a slightly milder flavor than the later storage onions. You can use them just like you would a regular onion, but they also make a great show sliced raw on hamburgers or sandwiches. Unlike an onion with a papery skin, you'll want to store these in a plastic sack in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.

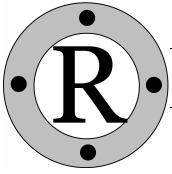
**Red Russian Kale** actually claims turnips, rather than regular green kale, as its closest relative. This week's harvest looks a little ragged due to the dry weather and a little nasty called the flea beetle, but it tastes great—rather mild with just a little tang. We occasionally use Red Russian Kale sliced into thin strips and served raw, but it is more popular in our house cooked as follows:

## Braised Tuscan Kale

Red Russian kale, stems removed  
Salt as needed  
2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 red onion thinly sliced  
1/2 rosemary sprig  
1 dried small red chile  
2 garlic cloves thinly sliced  
1/4 cup chicken stock or water

Coarsely chop the kale leaves and blanch them in boiling salted water, about 3 minutes, then drain. Heat the oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat and add the onion, rosemary and chile. Cook for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. When the onion is translucent and starting to color, 3 to 5 minutes, add the kale. Cook the kale over medium-low heat for 20 min. or so, stirring often. The kale will turn a deep, almost black color, become soft and then almost a little crisp. Add salt to taste. If the greens get too dry during the cooking, stir in a little stock or water. Serve over rice or as a side.

**Gold Zucchini** falls into that, "if you're going to grow \_\_\_\_\_, you may as well grow a more fun version" category. It's also much, much easier to pick, since green zucchini look pretty much like the leaf stalks on the zucchini plant. Use zucchini in stir-fries or light soups, or shave with a vegetable peeler and serve drizzled with olive oil and sesame seeds.



## Farm Mechanics

I was born with two opposable thumbs, but despite that fact, I spent much of my life with as much mechanical aptitude as your average ape (an insult once uttered by my grandmother-in-law about *her* son-in-law – she didn't know the depths of my own mechanical ignorance!). I credit this to my urban background and my father, whose primary approach to things like auto mechanics and plumbing generally involved words that I hadn't previously learned. And I was too busy reading books to get too greasy.

When I traveled across the country ten years ago to apply for a job as a farm manager on the coast of Maine, Kim taught me how to change the oil in our car so that I could say, at least somewhat truthfully, "Well, I'm not going to lie and tell you I'm a great mechanic or anything, but I do some work on my own car." But you can't spend much time on and around farms without having to get just a little bit handy, and I've been surprised lately to discover what I do know – or at least what I can figure out.

Our Rock Spring Farm life began, as do most farm lives, with the purchase of a tractor just a few weeks after we took possession of the property. The 1963 Farmall 504 was older than either of us, and we had a multitude of troubles with it and paid a lot of money in repair bills before we finally had a tractor that worked, at least some of the time. We were quite fortunate to be assisted in this process by a very patient shade tree mechanic, who made a number of emergency weekend calls in the shade of the silver maple in our front yard. In those days, we stored our tools in the mudroom, lacking another dry spot on the farm that wasn't being used for either growing or washing the vegetables.

After fighting the 504 for three full years – and losing too many battles, and missing too many opportunities because the tractor wasn't running – we took the plunge and invested in a new Kubota diesel. Not without a slight feeling of loss, we sold the old, red tractor. But by that time we had picked up an International 140 and an Allis Chalmers G for cultivating out the weeds, so we still had a fair bit of tinkering. Then we picked up an older Kubota 245 as an additional cultivator. And various pieces of used equipment still needed fixing, and even a new tractor requires plenty of periodic maintenance, so my mechanical education continued. I tore apart two flail choppers to get one that worked – sort of.

Zane helped me jimmy together an old two bottom plow that had sat unused on a hillside when we bought the farm. I changed oil, greased everything that moved, fixed stripped threads on bolts, learned about snap rings, extracted broken bolts, repaired a transmission on the Kubota 245, and generally figured out that if you take something apart, you can almost always get it back together. After all, if it doesn't work, you can't break it. (Thank goodness for Mabel's Village Farm and Home, where I can take any question and get answers – and tools!)

Last summer we had to take the old silver maple under which we had done all of our tractor repairs down – it got hit by a lightning strike that took out all of the house's electronics in 2005 – and we put up a small building that would, this spring, turn into a bona fide shop (we lived in it through the winter while our new house was under construction). There, with my tools close at hand and concrete under foot, no longer panicky about losing small parts in the un-mown grass, no longer walking a hundred feet to find the right sized wrench, I have discovered a little bit more about the beauty of the pure function behind the average farm machine. Once you take the tin off, it's all right there: oil filters, air valves, fuel injectors. The function of the various parts becomes clear once you have some vague idea of how the whole thing fits together. I reach out for tools naturally, or sit and think a little before diving in, but suddenly I have discovered a rush of confidence with this foreign world of grease and oil and diesel fuel. I guess those opposable thumbs might come in handy, after all.

### Summer Vegetable Share

Salad Mix  
Fresh Rocambole  
Garlic  
Fresh Red Onions  
Rosemary  
Sungold Cherry  
Tomatoes  
Dutch Greenhouse  
Cucumber  
Round Red Tomatoes  
Red Russian Kale  
Gold Zucchini  
Giant Snow Peas

### Salad Share

Salad Mix  
Dutch Greenhouse  
Cucumber  
Sungold Cherry  
Tomatoes  
Purple Scallions  
Fresh Rocambole  
Garlic

We spent most of this week watching the weather radar and praying for rain, but really to no avail. Or maybe to somebody else's avail. Or detriment. Just one county east and south of us, Marquette, Iowa received some ten inches of rain on Tuesday night. We got a tenth of an inch or so on Wednesday night, but that was it. Irrigation proceeded apace in our lower fields, while our upper field crops continued to prove quite resilient despite the tremendously long stretch of really dry weather. Chris ran errands in town on Wednesday morning, and everybody there complained about the heat, so we know it must be hot. But those of us who are out in it every day see to have acclimated, and our crew hasn't complained a bit (well, maybe a little, teensy bit, but no more than that.)

We set out another crop of broccoli in the upper fields and fall radicchio and Swiss chard down below, cultivated everything on the farm to kill some more weeds, and seeded another crop of salad mix. Lucas dragged the field cultivator around our fallow fields to keep flushing weeds and dragging out quack grass rhizomes, and tilled down some cover crop residues and an old bit of hayfield. The crops are surviving the drought just fine, but I keep wondering if the whole farm is just going to up and blow away one of these days. Ben and Zane kept moving the irrigation system. Kris and Katie kept the packing house operations rolling along. Pippa kept on top of the cucumber pruning, which isn't easy now that the trellised plants are over eight feet tall in the greenhouse—so we taught her to walk on the stilts we use to work up high. I figure this will add up to some serious tuff points when she goes back to college. Everybody helped break over the tops on our early varieties of onions and shallots, which gives them the cue that it's time to go dormant and develop their dry outer wrappers in preparation for the dry winter on the Russian steppes—or in our walk-in cooler after we fully cure them. If the humidity lets up a little bit, we'll start pulling onions from the field next week.

Jessica headed back to school in Fort Collins this week, marking the beginning of our annual back-to-school crew thinning. We've certainly appreciated Jessica's capable approach to any task on the farm.