

In Kim's Kitchen

Greenhouses Tomato harvest really came into full swing this week, and the packing shed is overflowing with trays of vine-ripe tomatoes. And when I say vine ripe, I mean it – unlike the California Tomato Commission which defines vine-ripened tomatoes as those harvested at the “breaker” stage – when the reddish color covers only 10% of the surface of the tomato! We grow our tomatoes in the soil in the greenhouse, and harvest them when they are truly ripe. By growing them in the greenhouse, we avoid many of the diseases that otherwise plague and defoliate organic tomatoes in our hot and humid climate – and by growing them in the soil, we avoid the insipid flavor of the hydroponic types. For best storage, keep the tomatoes cool but not cold (I know, that's not easy in the summer); to pop their flavor, set them on a sunny windowsill for twelve hours before you plan to eat them.

Of course, we don't often have to worry about how to store **Sungold Cherry Tomatoes**. The vines have reached the cross-pieces in the greenhouse, and we've had to stop them there, but we've still got a month of great harvests ahead of us. We hear from our market customers that our Sungolds taste better than everybody else's, and I think, again, it has to do with the protection provided by the greenhouse, and the fact that we have nine full feet of tomato vine pumping flavor into each of those little morsels. How could you go wrong?

The **Golden Zucchini** got away from us a little bit over the weekend, and we've got some large-ish ones that will make great zucchini bread, while working nicely in the traditional zucchini roles in stir-fries, soups, pilafs, and the like. We've got nice, small ones, too.

Chocolate Zucchini Bread

1lb zucchini (about 2 cups grated)
salt

3 cups flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 cup cocoa
3 eggs
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350. Coarsely grate the zucchini, salt and let stand. Drain and squeeze it dry. Sift together the flour, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, cocoa, and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Beat the eggs, sugar, and oil, then mix in the lemon juice and vanilla. Stir in dry ingredients and zucchini. Mix in the chocolate chips. Pour into a greased 9x5 loaf pan. Bake for 50 minutes.

We have finally broken into our carrot crop with **Carrots and Their Greens**, after having to wait way too long. A wet spring (remember that?) combined with an ill-timed pre-emergent flame weeding really messed up our carrot successions this spring, but I think we are back on track. The carrots taste great, and probably don't need any recipes or use suggestions. Just remember to take off the greens. Carrots with their greens are just for pretty, although a few hearty souls do use them for cooking or juicing. We'll kept the greens on for another week or two, then go the much more efficient method of harvesting and cleaning them without their tops.

I once read that a bunch of **Italian Parsley** in the refrigerator is the sign of a good cook. I really think parsley should be used often and with abandon for its great, fresh flavor and healthy

digestive effects. It snips nicely into salads or over cucumbers, and adds a nice note to everything from soups to biscuits.

Traditional Tabbouleh

1 cup medium bulgur wheat
1/2 cup lemon juice
1 bunch scallions, or 2 shallot, finely chopped
1 large bunch parsley, chopped, about 1 cup
1/4 cup chopped mint
1/2 Dutch cucumber, chopped
6 tablespoons olive oil
2 ripe tomatoes seeded and chopped
salt and pepper to taste
Put the bulgur in a bowl, cover with hot water and let stand for 30 minutes. The grains should be soft and all the water absorbed. Toss with the lemon juice, onion, tomatoes, parsley, mint and cucumber. Let stand 20 minutes. Add the salt and olive oil and toss. Serve at room temperature.

Shallots have a more delicate flavor than onions, and a finer flesh which works well chopped finely in raw dishes and salad dressings. If you use them in cooked dishes, cook them with relatively low heat – like garlic, they will get bitter if you burn them. Roasted like garlic, they make a nice spread for a sliced baguette. Store as you would a regular onion – dry and cool.

We've took our easy-to-peel **Rocambole Garlic** down from its curing place in the barn, trimmed the tops and roots, and moved them into our dry storage cooler. We also cleaned a fair bit for market and the CSA boxes this week. This year's crop came in quite a bit smaller than last year's, which is a little bit disappointing but tolerable.

Our Midwestern **Celery** has greener stalks and a stronger flavor than the pale giants from the grocery store, but still tastes nice raw or cooked. The kids often eat the stalks spread with peanut butter, but Chris prefers them with ranch dressing. For us, celery has a short season, as August's heat and humidity typically provides more non-celery weather than this tender plant can bear.

Celery Soup

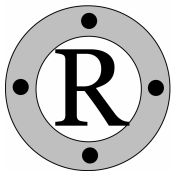
1 small bunch of celery
1 onion
1 zucchini
4 cups vegetable, or chicken stock
Olive oil, extra virgin one
parmesan cheese

Chop the onion and sauté in some olive oil for a couple of minutes. Slice the zucchini and the celery, chop the leaves too, and add them to the pan with the onion. Sauté for 5 minutes. Add the stock. Let it simmer for about 10-15 minutes, and then puree in blender. Top with parmesan cheese and serve.

Rock Spring Farm August Salad

4 medium tomatoes, chopped
3 stalks celery, finely sliced
1/4 cup chopped shallots or onion
6 Sungold cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
1/2 cup chopped parsley
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste
Toss all ingredients together in a bowl. Serve as side or over salad mix.

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Keeping It Fresh

Vegetables are living food, but without their attachment to the ground, they begin to deteriorate. We work hard to provide you with the freshest, best-quality vegetables possible, picking at just the right moment, cooling them quickly, and keeping them cold until the moment we deliver them. With the correct storage methods, you can keep these vegetables at their peak for an extended period of time.

Generally speaking, the quality of vegetable storage is influenced by three factors: temperature, humidity, and ethylene build up. Most vegetables like it cold—somewhere down around 32 degrees. Green leaves and roots also like a high humidity—somewhere around 95%; but standing water on the surface of the vegetables provides an environment for fungi and other rot organisms to germinate, so dry skin is important. Since relative humidity goes down as temperature goes down—even with the same amount of water in the air—this can be a difficult ideal environment to provide. At a commercial scale we do it with large plastic bags and a walk-in cooler; at home, loosely closed (don't tie them!) produce bags and the crisper drawer will work very well.

As fruit crops ripen, they produce ethylene, which further promotes ripening, and can cause bitter flavor in root crops—so don't store roots and fruits together. If you want to ripen a fruit—like a tomato—you can put it in a closed paper bag, where it will still have some air circulation, but the ethylene gas will build up and promote further ripening.

Leafy greens (salad, lettuce, Swiss chard) - All leafy greens should be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.

Roots (carrots, beets, spinruts) - Ideally, separate the tops from the roots, and store in a loosely closed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Often, the greens can be cooked as well, in which case store them as for leafy greens.

Dry-skinned Vegetables (cured onions, garlic) - The potatoes, onions and garlic we have been delivering are fresh, and should be stored in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator. Once we switch to mature potatoes with thicker skins and dry-skinned onions and garlic, store in a cool, dark, dry place (we use a bread box in the kitchen). Dry is more important than cool, and cool is more important than dark for the onions (for potatoes, keep them dark no matter what).

Tomatoes— Refrigerating tomatoes will break down the flavor components, so it is better to store them on the counter, with good air circulation (open the top of your Sungold Cherry Tomato clamshell).

Herbs (cilantro, parsley, oregano) - Store in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer. Too much of an herb? Chop it fine, mix with a little olive oil, and freeze in an ice cube tray. Pop the cubes and put them in a plastic bag in the freezer. Or, chop fine, spread on a cookie sheet, and bake on the lowest setting of your oven until dry.

Basil—Basil is a special case, and should not be stored in the refrigerator, as it will turn black. A loose plastic bag on the counter works well for a couple of days; otherwise, put the plastic bag in a paper bag for insulation, and store in the warmest part of the refrigerator (usually the door).

Veggie First Aid: I hate to talk about such things, but it is possible that someday you will pick up your box of vegetables, put it in your car, and head home. On your way you meet a friend, the two of you go out to dinner, you can't find a shady parking spot, you have too good a time for too long... and when you get home the Swiss chard looks tired and the romaine is a little ragged. All is not lost! Simply fill a sink with cold water, soak the greens for about ten minutes, then shake the greens dry and put them in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Chances are, they'll be just fine. This works with any of the herbs (except basil) and leafy greens.

Summer Vegetable Share

- Round Red Tomatoes
- Sungold Cherry Tomatoes
- Golden Zucchini
- Italian Parsley
- Dutch Greenhouse Cucumber *or* Salad Mix
- Shallots
- Rocambole Garlic
- Carrots with Their Tops
- Celery
- Salad Shares**
- Italian Parsley
- Celery
- Golden Zucchini
- Carrots with Their Tops
- Shallots

We had one of those hot, sultry weeks on the farm where everything just sort of rolled along, like we expected it to, and even some of the big things seemed like no big deal. About three inches of rain fell on Thursday night, just like the weather forecast said it would. What a relief! Normally a three-inch rain is too much to handle with aplomb, but everything just soaked in quite nicely. Chris mowed about six acres of land we are renting next year on Saturday, and got stung by a hornet in the process. His eye swelled up and he looked really silly for two full days. By Monday, we were able to proceed with tilling under the sod on this long-fallow pasture. We'll work it a few more times to beat back the perennial weeds like quackgrass and thistles, then plant it to rye and hairy vetch to overwinter and out-compete the weeds.

Chris' mom, Karlla, and stepdad, Mike, arrived on Friday evening for a summer visit, and spent most of the week at the pool. They're from Seattle, so they don't handle the heat so well. Mike, who manages a pension trust for a his living, wanted to learn how to drive the tractor, so Chris set him up mowing a cover crop of buckwheat so that he could take pictures home to prove that he had indeed done some "farm work." Mike left on Wednesday afternoon, but Karlla will be here into next week.

Kim seeded the fall crop of winter radishes and turnips on Wednesday, right on schedule. We put in the last crop of broccoli and more radicchio right before the rain at the end of last week. Lucas continued to fallow-till land that we are bringing around and into production on the home farm. Frankie mowed down some ridge-top alfalfa to let it lay for soil improvement – the worms love it. Chris cultivated all over the place, and for the first time this year didn't have to contend with muddy slabs or dried up bricks, just nice, loose soil with good moisture that flowed around the shovels and between the crops.