

# In Kim's Kitchen

With their beautiful blue skin and green-and-orange flesh, **Sweetie Melons** provide a great summer treat. No recipe needed here, just slice 'em and eat 'em. The flesh ranges from slightly crisp to smooth and silky, but the flavor is always just great. For the second year in a row, this former Rock Spring Farm cornerstone has had some pretty serious disease issues that we are working hard to deal with, so we are grateful for even this limited harvest.

We muddled out the carrots this week, since we didn't have much choice. What a great crop! I don't think we've ever had such nice, uniformly-large carrots. We've switched over to bulk, instead of bunched, because the leaves are looking a little bit ratty now, and it's much faster to harvest and wash the bulk carrots.

The first of our "fall" **Broccoli** came in this week, pushed along by the heat and the rain. Personally, I don't care for raw broccoli, but I love it lightly cooked. I think broccoli gets ruined by overcooking more than any other vegetables. The stems take a little longer to cook than the florets, so start them cooking first, and when they've gone crisp-tender, add in the florets. We came up a little bit short on both the Broccoli and the **Sweet Red Peppers**, so in the CSA, some folks got one and some folks got the other. Next week's harvest looks much fuller for both of these crops.

The first of our storage **Yellow Onions** are finally cured and cleaned. These are your standard old yellow onion, and you can use them anywhere you would use any onion. It feels kind of weird to grow a crop that's just plain normal, but I guess it's bound to happen sooner or later.

Do I need to say anything about **Sungold Cherry Tomatoes**? On Sunday, I sliced a pint of these in half, laid them cut side up in a baking dish, drizzled with olive oil, salt, and thyme, and roasted them away from the heat on the grill until they were shriveled and delicious. Of course, I have a greenhouse full, and most people never even get their Sungolds home with them.

**Italian Parsley** just makes you a darned good cook. Throw a little bit in everything and you can't go wrong.

Like broccoli, French Petite Green Beans are best cooked just very lightly. We bought a grill basket and when you grill these little guys, you're pretty much eating first class.

## **Pasta with Charred Green Beans**

1/4 cup chopped walnuts  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
3/4 pound green beans, cut into 1 inch lengths  
2 shallots, minced or 1 small onion minced  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon Italian parsley, finely chopped  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 pound penne pasta  
3/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled

Bring water to boil for pasta. In skillet toast walnuts

over high heat, about 5 minutes. Cool on a plate. Add one teaspoon of oil to the skillet along with the beans and cook over high heat, stirring, until tender and blackened in spots. About 10 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon of oil and add onion, garlic, summer savory or parsley and cook for 2 minutes. Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper. Cook pasta until al dente. Add the pasta to the skillet and toss with the green beans, stir in one cup of the pasta water. Add the cheese, walnuts and the remaining oil toss and serve.

## **Tabouleh by Kim**

1 cup bulgur wheat  
1-3/4 boiling water  
1/4 cup olive oil  
14 oz can cooked garbanzo beans  
2 Tbsp lemon juice  
1 cup green beans in 1-inch pieces  
2 finely chopped garlic cloves  
1/3 cup chopped parsley  
Pour boiling water over bulgur wheat; cover and let sit for 30 minutes. Fluff with a fork, stir in remaining ingredients and add salt and pepper to taste.

**Salad Mix** harvest was a real challenge this week, since the crop spent some time submerged by the heavy rains and emerged covered in plant debris from the overland water flow. But our great pickers and packers worked hard to get them clean, and I think it shows. Still, I would suggest rinsing and drying this mix again, to get the last of the plant debris and little black weed seeds off. By the way, the little black weed seeds come from pigweed, the wild ancestor of amaranth. So you could just add dressing and enjoy the little bit of extra protein.

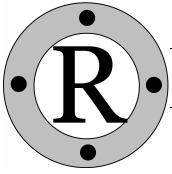
And, of course, **Round Red Tomatoes** from our greenhouses continue to produce nicely. I think that sliced tomatoes served with fresh mozzarella is just about as good as it gets.

## **Roasted Trout on a Bed of Summer Vegetables**

*We like trout, but any fish fillet can be used here. Or skip the fillet, and just serve the vegetables.*

3 zucchini, sliced into 1/4 inch pieces  
3 medium tomatoes, 1/4 inch slices  
1 medium onion, thinly sliced  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon cilantro or parsley, minced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 1/2 pounds fresh trout fillets  
Preheat oven to 450. Spread on the bottom of a 13 x 9 inch baking pan 2 tablespoons olive oil, followed by the onions, eggplant, and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle over the top 1 tablespoon olive oil. Roast, until the tomatoes are beginning to bubble, 10 to 15 minutes. Place the trout on top of the vegetables, brush with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle the top with the cilantro or parsley. Roast for 10 to 15 minutes, or until fish is done.

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## Environmental Commitment

Flipping through the Gaiam Mind Body catalog the other day (their Therapeutic Support Gloves provide great relief for the Reynould's syndrome that causes my fingers to go numb in the slightest cold), I noticed that they, like many other catalogs, make a big deal out of planting 1,430 trees to offset the CO2 emissions from their headquarters and fulfillment center. After a quick bit of math, I calculated that Rock Spring Farm had planted some 200,000 trees four years ago, which left me thinking about just how fundamental doing the right thing for the environment is for organic farmers. So, I want to take a moment to toot our environmental horn. At Rock Spring Farm, we:

Planted 10 acres of hardwood forest in the fall of 2004, and 2,000 additional trees in the spring of 2005; by the time these tree reach ten years of age, they will offset the carbon emissions from transporting our produce by more than a factor of 10.

Invested in a "green" packing facility for our vegetable operation. Built from Structural Insulated Panels, our packing house uses up to 50% less energy than a comparable building constructed with conventional methods. Our two walk-in coolers share an interior wall, and have 50% more insulation than a standard cooler wall. In-floor, radiant heat and passive solar design also contribute to energy efficiency. We installed fluorescent and compact fluorescents in every space, using incandescent bulbs only where we need lighting in very cold situation. An on-demand water heater reduces the amount of hot water needed to "fill the pipes" at our hand washing sink. Dual-flush toilets ensure that water usage and septic system load remains at a minimum.

Purchased an extremely fuel-efficient refrigerated delivery vehicle in 2005. Our Freightliner Sprinter has logged up to 22 miles per gallon, and runs at more than 75% of its cubic capacity on more than 75% of our delivery and farmers market trips. By comparison, a typical box truck might get between nine and twelve miles per gallon, and new pickup trucks run in the 20 miles-per-gallon range.

Invested in right-sized, fuel-efficient tractors. As with the delivery truck, it makes more sense to run at capacity most of the time, rather than hauling around a bunch of horsepower we don't need to get the job done. And the differences in fuel efficiency among tractors can be pretty astounding.

Developed delivery connections for smaller deliveries that allow us to "piggy-back" on loads already traveling between Decorah and the Twin Cities. In the Twin Cities, we work with Coop Partners Warehouse to "cross dock" our deliveries to outlying stores, again taking advantage of empty space on trucks already making the trip.

Print our newsletters on 100% post-consumer content recycled paper. It's also processed chlorine free.

Encourage biodiversity, even when it's inconvenient. Every two years, we argue with the coyote trappers who come to our land (they disagree with us, but respect our property rights) about whether the effort that goes into keeping young lambs away from coyotes, through the use of electric fence and a guard donkey, outweighs the benefits that coyotes provide by controlling rodents, which make up most of their diet. Likewise, we spend hours each year cleaning fallen trees out of our fields, but we leave the dead trees around our fields standing to encourage hawks and owls to perch there to keep rabbits and mice under control. Cover crops, compost, unmowed areas, and timed grazing also make our farm a friendly place for all of the critters.

I actually think that, for organic farmers, making decisions that benefit the environment is our fallback position most of the time, even when we aren't trying to do the right thing for the planet. We're out in it all the time, and we see the dramatic interactions that take place out in the world, and we know that we need that world to be a sane and steady place for us to have the best possible chance of long-term success.

Our drought finally broke two weeks ago with a full three inches one night, almost all of it soaking into the thirsty soil. And since then, it just hasn't quit. Tuesday night brought over two inches of additional rain, most of which seemed to fall in the space of about an hour, replete with house-shaking thunder and lightning that made that fizz-pop sound when it gets so close. We managed not to lose any electronics, which seems like a miracle – our current fax machine is actually threatening to wear out after three years, instead of getting blown up after the first twelve months, which had been the former pattern. The rain continued much of the night and all morning on Wednesday, before we ventured back out to the fields to harvest the rest of the crops in the mud. We've had parts of three low-lying fields, including our storage carrots, under water for several days now, but elsewhere on the farm things are looking great. The broccoli and cabbage and whatnot up on the ridge look fantastic; this rain was timed perfectly for them to make their push to maturity.

Kim and Zane returned from a mid-summer vacation to the Crazy Mountains on Sunday. I take it as a sign of moderate success that either Kim or I could conceive of leaving the farm for a week in the summer and have some reasonable expectation of everything being okay. Which, by and large, it was. They had a good time with the group of ten former- and current homeschoolers they took with them, although Kim did take a nasty spill in a raging river and came back a little bit bruised and banged up (as did her digital camera and MP3 player).

We've taken the fact that the rain has kept us moderately out of the field to tackle some indoor projects, such as trimming and sorting the garlic, removing the clips that hold our tomatoes on their trellis strings, repairing some packing house equipment, and patching up the greenhouse irrigation system. This week's harvest has been decidedly muddy, and the mud doesn't make anything easy, weather we are talking about digging carrots with the tractor or carrying a crate of salad mix out of the fields.

Wednesday was Pippa's last day, and we've decided to award give her the title of Employee of the Month, even though she is leaving halfway through it. Pippa is heading back to St. John's College, although this year she's going to the Annapolis campus rather than Santa Fe. St. John's emphasizes a "Great Books" approach to learning, so that Geometry is learned by reading Euclid instead of learning proofs (although Euclid does involve proofs). Pippa has obviously done well, and we have all enjoyed sharing her experience and intellect as she calmly moves through each day with competence, grace, and wit. We are going to miss her.

### Summer Vegetable Share

Sweetie Melon  
Carrots  
Yellow Onions  
Broccoli *or* Sweet Red Pepper  
Sungold Cherry Tomatoes  
Italian Parsley  
Gold Zucchini  
French Petite Green Beans  
Salad Mix  
Round Red Tomatoes  
**Salad Shares**  
Carrots  
Sungold Cherry Tomatoes  
Italian Parsley  
Salad Mix  
Round Red Tomatoes