

Schreiber & Sons CSA

It's a Culinary Adventure

Schreiberandsons.com

June 1, 2009

Week V

In this Week's box

- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Mustard greens
- Radish - White Icicle
- Radish - Pink Celebration or French Country Breakfast
- Bok Choy
- Salad mix
- Spring onions
- Broccoli/Cauliflower - for large and medium organic share members. The broccoli and cauliflower is only ready in the organic blocks-not sure what yet, but we will have something else for the conventional members.

The Weather. It was only three weeks ago that we were having weather so cold that it was threatening some of our crops.... 24 days ago we had a light frost at the farm. This past week we had temperatures that literally tied records for hot weather. To some degrees many crops can tolerate some cool weather, to some degrees some crops can tolerate hot weather; but what very plants can tolerate is cold weather closely followed by hot weather. Certain crops are very susceptible to these extreme swings in temperatures. Two varieties of radish, the long, red carrot shaped variety and a special type of radish, called a black radish bolted, which means it sent up a seed head. Once a seed head has been sent up radish and many other crops are no longer palatable. Any of the broccoli or cauliflower crops that experienced early stress are bolting, which is the reason that we are short on broccoli and cauliflower. It is not because we did not plant enough, but rather the crop has flowered and is not longer edible. It is very hard to take to buy the seed and transplants, plant it, fertilize, water and weed it and a week before harvest see the crop bolt. This is the exact reason that most cole crops are grown in places like western Oregon and Washington and coastal California. The reason we have some organic broccoli and cauliflower but not conventional is interesting. Because organic fertilizer is naturally derived it releases more slowly than conventional fertilizer. Because of this, organic crops often grow more slowly than some conventional crops (this is broad generalization), but this was the case for the broccoli and cauliflower and the organic version for these crops were planted a little later than the conventional crops and thus missed some of the coldest weather. As a result all of the early conventional broccoli and cauliflower bolted and only two thirds of the organic. We have a second planting of all of these crops, so if the weather cooperates, I hope to have more broccoli and cauliflower---and for sure we will have fall servings of these crops.

The Locavore's Dilemma - One of the challenges YOU WILL HAVE is what to do when you see some of the bizarre and crazy food items. Last year a few of you rejoiced at the sight of the rutabaga, but most of you were bewildered with what to do with this purple topped behemoth. I can promise you that at some

point everyone one of you will be stumped with what to do with something in your box. Our goal is to have the widest selection of produce available. Most people like the diversity but everyone has a limit. Dealing with a new and unusual item of produce can challenge the best and most adventuresome of cooks. Take this week's mustard greens or the kohlrabi that is in your future, what do you do with them. First, check the upcoming hypertext, which was sent to me by CSA member Ingrid Stegemoeller (ag report for the Tri-City Herald)-in the article you will recognize the clear play on Michael Pollen's book title. <http://www.slate.com/id/2214524/> The article humorously deals with the plight of the CSA member facing an odd item of produce.

A second way to deal with this issue is to go to the Schreiber & Sons CSA (schreiberandsons.com). On this website we have lots of recipes for many of our crops. My favorite website for recipes is epicurean.com. If you have a favorite recipe, email it to us and we will put it up on the website.

The Washington State Diet. Okay, I think we have our intrepid group of Washington State dieters. We are going to have a kick off meeting where we come up with the final rules, form a little support group and we make a plan on how we are going to do this. I have a goal of starting around July 1. We have as many as 7 that want to make a run at this. There are some others who are interested in trying to go as Washington as possible, but are not willing to go all the way (I am in this group) and are interested in participating. If you are planning to be a Washington State Dieter, are interested in learning or more or just more on how to source more local foods, you should attend this meeting. It will either be at our house or at the farm.

If you want to attend send us a couple of suggested dates that work for you and we will pick the time that works for the most people. The time has to be between June 10 and June 23.

What is going on at the farm. Weed control. It seems like when the weather was cool the weeds grew really well, but with the warm weather they are growing even faster. The weeds are about ready to overwhelm us. It would be easy if we could spray all of them with herbicides, but it just does not work that way out here. We are going to use a few herbicides here and there, but we pretty much rely on hoes, tillage, mowing and hand pulling. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings, we planting 8 acres of eggplant. With the heat, we putting on as much water as possible. Irrigation is a constant struggle. We have been relying on our neighbors bees to pollinate but we are entering the pollination season so we are getting about 50 hives of bees. Of course, we picking, washing and packing produce. We have a lot of melons on the farm so we are trying to build a melon picking machine based on the similar design of our eggplant harvest aid. We are trying to replace the engine on the forklift. I realized through a miscommunication we planted too much sweet corn. On one hand this means you guys should be getting a lot of sweet corn when it comes, the down side it means that while you get a lot early, you will get less later in the season. I could go on and on about the goings on here, but I am running out of time to get this update out to you.

Add Ons. Eggs. I am sorry but we only can offer up between 30 and 35 dozen eggs each week. When I planned to provide eggs I had to provide an estimate of how many we would wanted to our egg ladies at the end of last year before most of you had signed up. They had to take my estimate and buy the chickens, raise them and target all of this to start egg laying the first week of May. More of you were interested in eggs than I expected and for some reason some of their chickens are what is called "reluctant layers" and are not as productive as they expected. So if we put some of you on hold, please be understanding. I hope that we can get more eggs in a month or two. Beef. The cows we order yield about 70% roasts and hamburger and 30% steaks. Most of you order steaks and roasts and less hamburger. As a result we are out of steaks and roasts and have about 100 pounds of hamburger left. (If you want hamburger, we would really like to get it moved.) Two weeks ago I ordered another cow... it took a week to get it to the locker plant, a week for the meat to hang, and a week to get it cut, wrapped, frozen and to us. So, if you are keeping track, we should have roasts, steaks and a lot of hamburger by next week. So we are more than happy to take hamburger orders and we will be ready to take steak orders this week for delivery for next week. Flour I realize that flour is not as cool of a food item as free

range eggs or organic beef, but you probably eat as much flour as you do either of the other items. A shipment of flour is 2,400 pounds in 5 pound bags. We are moving 3 to 5 bags a week. At this rate we should finish off the flour by 2011. Feel free to order some flour. Alfalfa We have alfalfa-someone asked if it was organic-the answer is...no. The cost is \$6 per bale. We can leave it at a drop off site-but we would not mind if you came and picked it up at the farm.

Now for something really interesting.... we have a new ADD ON. Claar Cellars is a winery that is just down the road and is owned by a long time Franklin Country grower. Many years ago I was not a particular fan of the wine from this winery, but about four years ago they brought on a winemaker from France. Bruno Corneaux, his wife Isabelle and two sons became friends of ours and through our social interactions got to sample the fruits of his labor. Clearly this is a new Claar Cellars. In part, due to Bruno's tutelage, Claar Cellars has become a real up and coming business moving from a 12,000 case a year winery to a 40,000 case a year operation in the next one to two years. Two wines caught my attention; their 2008 rose (sangiovese) and 2007 sauvignon blanc. The rose has been a huge hit and is expected to sell out within the next month or two. The sauvignon blanc is sold out. I was able to get 5 cases of each wine. Both wines are served chilled and are very good on a hot day. None of these wines are available in local grocery stores as most of their inventory is sold in the Chicago and New York areas. If you are interested in having a bottle or two in your box, let us know. The cost of each is \$13.

Send us your thoughts on any of the add ons and if we can, we will include them in a future update.

CSA Business. Remember the Choice Box, you can switch out one or two items in your box for one or two items in the Choice Box. Remember to return your box, flattened, each week. It really helps us if we can reuse our box.

Never a dull moment on the farm.

If anyone wants to volunteer to weed, let us know... we have lots of weeds begging to be ripped out by their vicious little roots.

Your Farmer,

Alan Schreiber

Mustard Greens

Brassica juncea

Mustard greens are the leaves of the mustard plant. The leaves of mustard greens can have either a crumpled or flat texture and may have either toothed, scalloped, frilled or lacey edges. In addition to providing wonderfully nutritious greens, this plant also produces the acrid-tasting brown seeds that are used to make Dijon mustard.

Mizuna (*Brassica juncea* var. *japonica*) is a Japanese mustard green also known as Xiu Cai, Kyona, Japanese Mustard, Potherb Mustard, Japanese Greens and California Peppergrass. It dandelion-like jagged edge green leaves with a mild, sweet earthy flavor. It has been cultivated in Japan since ancient times, but most likely originated in China. Mizuna is often a part of our salad mixes.

In a 14th century Italian cookbook there are as many recipes Mustard Greens for mustard greens as those for any other vegetable, yet mustard greens are virtually unknown in Italy today and are rarely used in the United States outside of ethnic cooking.

Mustard greens originated in the Himalayan region of India and have been grown and consumed for more than 5,000 years. Mustard greens are present in many different cuisines, ranging from Chinese to Southern American. Like turnip greens, they may have become an integral part of Southern cuisine during the times of slavery, serving as a substitute for the greens that were an essential part of Western African food ways. While India, Nepal, China and Japan are among the leading producers of mustard greens, a significant amount of mustard greens are grown in the United States as well.

Health Benefits

Mustard greens are an excellent source of both vitamins A and C and contain several other vitamins and minerals as well as fiber and protein. Being a member of the Brassica family along with broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts, they also feature phytonutrients known as glucosinolates.

One of the unique features of mustard greens is that they are an excellent source of three notable antioxidants: vitamin E, vitamin C and vitamin A (through their concentration of beta-carotene). By providing antioxidant protection in both the water and fat-soluble areas of the body, mustard greens may offer great benefit to individuals with conditions ranging from asthma to heart disease to menopausal symptoms ...just to name a few.

The vitamin E supplied by mustard greens is instrumental to a host of different mechanisms that reduce the development of arteriosclerosis, including protecting LDL ("bad") cholesterol particles from oxidation and decreasing platelet clumping. In addition, mustard greens also feature concentrated amounts of other nutrients that can keep your heart healthy. Included among them are vitamin B6, folic acid and magnesium.

How to Store

Mustard greens should be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. They should keep fresh for about three to four days.

Tips for Preparing Mustard Greens:

For basic mustard green preparation, wash the leaves as you would wash spinach. Cut along the stem and remove. Or, if you plan to cook the greens for a long time, such as when using them in soup, you can keep the leaves intact with their center stem.

Serving Ideas:

- * Young mustard greens make great additions to salads.
- * Serve sautéed mustard greens with walnuts or pine nuts and lemon juice.
- * Add chopped mustard greens to a pasta salad.
- * Try chopped tomatoes, pine nuts, goat cheese, pasta and mustard greens tossed with a little olive oil (or a variation thereof).

SPINACH

Spinacia oleracea

"On the subject of spinach: divide into little piles. Rearrange again into new piles. After five of six maneuvers, sit back and say you are full."

Delia Ephron, *How To Eat Like A Child*

Botanically, spinach is part of the *Chenopodiaceae* family. It grows well in temperate climates in both the spring and autumn (avoiding the hot part of the summer). Today, the United States and the Netherlands are among the largest commercial producers of spinach.

There are three main types of spinach generally available. *Schreiber & Sons* grows all three, so any one may be found in your box.

Flat or Smooth Leaf: Flat or smooth leaf spinach has unwrinkled, spade-shaped leaves that have a milder taste than the savoy. This variety is commonly used for canned and frozen spinach as well as for soups, baby foods, and other processed foods. Flat leaf spinach is usually the preferred choice for raw dishes, as it has a much milder flavor.

Savoy: Savoy has crinkly, dark green curly leaves. The texture is different from the flat leaf but tastes equally as good.

Semi-Savoy: Increasing in popularity is the semi-savoy variety, which has slightly curly leaves, is less-pungent and much easier to clean. This variety is usually sold fresh. It is also found in processed foods.

Spinach is thought to have originated in ancient Persia (Iran). It made its way to China in the 7th century when the king of Nepal sent it as a gift to this country. Spinach has a much more recent history in Europe than many other vegetables. It was only brought to that continent in the 11th century, when the Moors introduced it into Spain. In fact, for a while, spinach was known as "the Spanish vegetable" in England.

Spinach was the favorite vegetable of Catherine de Medici in the 16th century. When she left her home of Florence, Italy, to marry the king of France, she brought along her own cooks, who could prepare spinach the ways that she especially liked. Since this time, dishes prepared on a bed of spinach are referred to as "a la Florentine."

In the history of food, spinach has the claim to fame of being the first frozen vegetable sold.

Storage and Use: Fresh spinach should be dried (or not washed at all) and packed loosely in a cellophane or plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator crisper. If stored properly, it should last 3 or 4 days. Avoid storing cooked spinach as it will not keep very well.

Preparation: *We have washed the spinach you receive, however, it grows in sandy soil, so wash it thoroughly again to get rid of the grainy, sandy particles.* Tear off the stem (though it is edible as well). Separate the leaves, and place them in a large bowl of water, rinse several times.

Although 19th century cookbooks called for boiling spinach for 25 minutes, the green can be eaten raw, or for even more nutritional benefit, cooked for as briefly as 1 minute. Spinach cooks down to about one-third its uncooked size, so pile your pan full of raw leaves. As mentioned below, cooked spinach provides three times the nutrients of eating it raw (I believe this is equal to the amount of reduction during cooking), so you are better off nutritionally to eat the vegetable cooked. For extensive cooking instructions, see the end of this publication.

Raw: If spinach is to be eaten raw, dry it completely by using a salad spinner or by blotting it with paper towels.

Blanching: Drop leaves into a large pot of boiling water. Once the leaves slightly wilt, drain and squeeze out excess moisture. This method is used to quick-cook spinach or to prepare it for sautéing, braising, or stuffing, and usually takes 2 to 5 minutes.

Microwaving: This method can be used instead of blanching. Place washed, slightly wet spinach in a microwavable dish, loosely cover, and cook until tender (4 to 7 minutes for ½ pound of spinach).

Sautéing: Blanched spinach can be sautéed quickly with a quick spray of oil. If cooked in a non-stick pan, only a spray is needed for several cups of chopped spinach. Try adding some garlic for flavor.

Steaming: If you plan to steam the spinach, do not dry leaves after washing. Steamed spinach makes a great side dish and usually takes only 5 to 10 minutes.

Nutritional Benefits

Popeye made himself super strong by eating spinach, but he may not have known he was also protecting himself against osteoporosis, heart disease, colon cancer, arthritis, and other diseases at the same time. Calorie for calorie, leafy green vegetables like spinach provide more nutrients than any other food. It is rich in a number of essential nutrients, including calcium, folate, iron, magnesium, vitamin C and vitamin A. Spinach is also a great source of lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoid phytonutrients that are important for healthy eyes.

Eating about one cup of raw spinach offers roughly one-third of the nutrition as half a cup of cooked spinach (which is actually equal to about three cups raw). So, while spinach makes a great addition to cold salads and sandwiches, enjoying your spinach hot packs a better nutritional punch.

Important note: Although spinach is in fact a good source of both calcium and iron, it's important to note that certain compounds found within spinach, called oxalic acids, block the absorption of these two minerals. Iron and calcium in plant foods are not highly absorbed by the body. Spinach contains a chemical called oxalic acid, which binds with iron and calcium and reduces the absorption of these minerals. To improve iron absorption, spinach should be eaten with vitamin C-rich foods such as orange juice, tomatoes, or citrus fruit. Researchers have identified at least 13 different flavonoid compounds in spinach that function as antioxidants and as anti-cancer agents.

The vitamin K provided by one cup of fresh spinach leaves is almost 200% of the Daily Value and in one cup of boiled spinach, over 1000% of the Daily Value. Vitamin K is important for maintaining bone health. Spinach is also an excellent source of other bone-building nutrients including calcium and magnesium. Spinach is also an excellent source of folate (65.6% of the daily value in one cup boiled) and an magnesium (full daily value). The vitamin C and beta-carotene in spinach help to protect the colon cells from the damaging effects of free radicals. And the folate in spinach helps to prevent DNA damage and mutations in colon cells, even when they are exposed to cancer-causing chemicals. In animal studies, researchers have found that spinach may help protect the brain from oxidative stress and may reduce the effects of age-related related declines in brain function. Researchers found that feeding aging laboratory animals spinach-rich diets significantly improved both their learning capacity and motor skills.