

Schreiber & Sons

It's a Culinary Adventure

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Week VI

1. Asparagus for medium and large shares
2. Bok choy - Organic
3. Radishes
4. Spinach - Bundled
5. Green leaf lettuce - Bagged
6. Snow peas
7. Chinese cabbage - for medium and large shares
8. Turnips
9. Swiss chard
10. Carrots
11. Spring mixed greens - 33% green leaf, 33% red leaf lettuce and 33% mixture of endive, spinach, arugula, and cress.

My usual caveats--we may run out of some items and make substitutions and some times we have to change our items during the week. We will put an updated list in your box. The asparagus season is almost over. Our production is down and we do not have enough asparagus to go around. Next week will be the last asparagus of the season.

We asked the CSA advisory group (The League of Culinary Adventures, Ltd or LOCAL) for their opinion on how to manage the quantities for the smalls versus the medium sized shares. Overwhelmingly, the answer back *was* that rather than keep portion size up and reduce variety, we should keep the portion sizes down and keep the variety as broad as possible. The League has spoken. However, having said that, we still have to limit variety at times. For example, the Chinese cabbage and asparagus is limited in supply and these items will not be going out to the small share members. I feel like saying sorry about this----but the deal is that small shares are to be about 50% less than the mediums and fair is fair.

You are getting Swiss chard this week. I think Swiss chard is one of the emblematic vegetables of a CSA. I think very few people buy Swiss chard (I know some of you do). But every CSA has it. It is an essential item of direct market programs. I put Swiss chard up there with kale. Chinese cabbage, which is also called Napa cabbage, is a great vegetable. Watch out..... one cabbage turns into a huge item when you cook it. The classic thing make from it is kimchi, a recipe for which Tanya included below. It is [also](#) good when you include it in a stir fry. We would love to hear your recipes for Napa cabbage and for Swiss chard.

Cool weather. Last Friday the high was 65 degrees, about 20 degrees below [normal](#). The good news is that this weather is perfect for leafy greens, such as lettuces and other cool season crops such as radish and bok choy. Because of the weather you get to enjoy (or be punished, depending on your point of view) with more of these crops. The down side is that it has significantly slowed down when we expected a large number of crops. Our poor little eggplants are barely growing, our tomatoes are growing, but not nearly as rapidly as we had expected. We need hot weather, or at least some warmer weather-and preferably with less wind.

Kale. The saga of kale....the latest kale comment is below. I guess my bias shows, while it is hard for me to see what other people (my wife included) see in kale, I must be in the minority. I am surprised at the passion that kale inspires. By the way, we harvested the kale pretty hard last week, so it may be a couple of weeks before we have kale to harvest again.

And finally, regarding your latest email about kale: we love kale and would love to keep getting it. I used to puree it and then freeze it in ice cube trays that I would then feed [it](#) to my kids in yogurt when they were babies. It's the super-est of the super greens. Like the one guy with mason jar implies--you couldn't get more vitamins and minerals from any other vegetable. I use it in soups, fried rice, salads, and quiches. I probably wouldn't [mix it in with](#) yogurt anymore--that was a little too much. :-)

Feeding kale in yogurt to poor defenseless little babies, how could anyone do that to their kids; punishment, I suppose.

Most of the nutritional information and a lot of the crop information comes from Tanya. Tanya and I do not work well together, but when we do, the product is often pretty good. We have her to thank for the following descriptions.

Turnips

Botanical name: *root of Brassica rapa*

Contrary to popular belief a turnip is not a swollen root, but results from a swollen stalk of the plant. The turnip, a member of the mustard family and related to cabbage, was first cultivated 4,000 years ago in the Near East and is well-appreciated throughout Europe and Asia, where it is eaten raw, pickled and cooked in multiple modes. Surprisingly, this diverse vegetable has been largely neglected throughout most of the United States, where it means pretty much one thing, the radish-shaped, lilac topped white turnip. Turnips grow in a variety of colors and sizes. Forty-four were listed in *The Field and Garden Vegetables of America*, published in 1863, ranging from black to rose and spherical to oblong. However, until very recently, recipes throughout most of the United States have attempted to hide turnips by cooking them for a long time in meat broth, saturating them with sauce or boiling them to a tasteless pulp. Such treatment leaves no turnip in the turnip. Try these fresh turnips raw, then perhaps in a few simple recipes. *Highlight, don't hide, your turnips.*

Nutritional value: Turnips are a source of [carbohydrate](#), [fiber](#), [calcium](#), carotene, [phosphorus](#), sodium, [magnesium](#), [potassium](#), [iron](#), [zinc](#), [copper](#), [vitamin C](#), [vitamin K](#), [vitamin E](#), thiamin, [riboflavin](#), [niacin](#), [pantothenic acid](#), [vitamin B6](#), [selenium](#) and [folic acid](#).¹ Many of these nutrients have [antioxidant](#) properties.

Selection and Storage: Select only hard, solid, pearly globes. Small to medium turnips are usually sweetest. Avoid dull, slack-skinned, darkening, soft, or lightweight turnips or any that feel spongy at the stem. Turnips with greens are the freshest. Turnips dehydrate very quickly and turn bitter, so store them, plastic wrapped, in the coldest part of the refrigerator for no more than a few days.

Preparation: No matter how smooth and fresh, turnips are better peeled. It is also a good idea to taste for bitterness (which can ruin a dish). High-quality turnips slice as smoothly as potatoes.

Use: Serve turnips raw, on a vegetable plate, or use in relish, salsa or slaw. Don't overcook as turnips retain sweetness and fresh flavor if just tender and get bland and flabby if overcooked.

They also make an excellent addition to mashed potato or as a mashed side on their own. Turnips are also good mixed with beans, vegetable stock, cabbage, other root vegetables and some [thyme](#) and [sage](#).

GREEN PEA

Botanical name: *Pisum sativum*, *Macrocarpon Group*

The garden pea, a legume, is one of the earliest cultivated food crops. More than 1,000 varieties of peas are in existence today. Peas have played a role in nearly every culture as a staple and have served as a pioneer in food processing modernization. Peas also made a great scientific contribution to the basics of genetics when Mendel conducted studies on how pea plants reproduced.

The general consensus is that peas could have originated in the region that spans from the Near or Middle East across to Central Asia. Considering that most peas are a cool-weather crop, some historians believe their country of origin may have been northern India, Burma, or Northern Thailand. Archeologists found peas between Burma and Thailand that were carbon dated at 9750 BCE. Another archeological dig in Iraq uncovered peas that were dated between 7,000 and 6,000 BCE and archeological remains of Bronze Age villages in Switzerland contain early traces of peas dating back to 3,000 BCE.

The Greeks and Romans were cultivating this legume about 500 to 400 BCE. Apicius, Rome's first cookbook author of the ancient world, has nine recipes for cooking peas. Charlemagne liked finding new vegetables and fruits from other lands and cultivating them in his gardens, so when peas reached France about 800, he had them planted in his domains. By the 13th century peas were a common food in France. At the end of the 14th century, the Italians had cultivated tiny peas they named *piselli novelli* which were eaten fresh rather than dried. The familiar garden pea was readily accepted and quickly became popular in Europe during the 16th century. During colonial times in Southern United States peas provided nutritious sustenance and even took precedence over beans. Peas were Thomas Jefferson's favorite vegetable; he thought so highly of them that he planted 30 varieties.

When canned vegetables came into vogue during the late 1800s, peas were among the first vegetables to be canned by The Campbell Soup Company. Then came frozen vegetables, appearing in the 1920s and 1930s, which provided a distinct advantage for peas. They could be harvested and frozen almost immediately before their sugars turned to starch.

Nutritional value: Green peas are a good source of [vitamins A](#) and [C](#), as well as [iron](#) and [potassium](#). In addition, green peas provide about 90% as much [protein](#) as do eggs per unit weight.

Selection and Storage: The freshest, sweetest peas are those picked right from the garden. When selecting fresh peas, look for pods that are bright green, shiny, plump, and moist. Three pounds of shelling peas render 4 servings. Use fresh peas as quickly as possible, either by cooking or eating raw. The sugar content of shelling peas begins to turn to starch within hours after harvesting. If stored for too many days, they lose their sweetness, leaving them with a bland, starchy flavor.

Swiss Chard *beta vulgaris cicla*

Swiss chard is a versatile leafy green with great nutritional benefits. *Beta vulgaris* is the common beet, which becomes chard with the appending of *Cicla*, from *sicula*, referring to both Sicily and a beet variety grown there. It is a vegetable valedictorian with its exceptionally impressive list of health promoting nutrients. Swiss chard is an excellent source of vitamins A and C, and also contains potassium and fiber.

While talking with my Swiss “mom” last week, I mentioned that we are now harvesting Swiss chard at the farm. As I didn’t know the German word, and she didn’t know the English, we briefly discussed why it could have the name it does. Turns out neither the *Swiss* nor the *chard* have a direct logical explanation

The *Swiss* part comes from one or several sources. Some claim that *Swiss* was used to distinguish chard from French charde or chardon by nineteenth century seed catalogue publishers and the name stuck. There is an extensive Swiss national collection of leaf beet (and chard) genetic resources, which likely means the crop has some importance to the Swiss. As it turns out *chard* is the definite misnomer. Chard comes from the Latin and French words for thistle—which Swiss chard isn’t, but cardoon is. Carde or chard came to mean the stalk or rib of some vegetables, such as chard or cardoon. And finally, the word *Swiss Chard* is popular among Mediterranean cooks but the first varieties have been traced back to Sicily. In the US the leaves are valued while European cooks value the stalks to the point of discarding the leaves or feeding them to animals. Swiss chard can also be found in northern Europe and South America. [Note from Alan: For me the most exotic plant we are experimenting this year is cardoon....it is an old, old, old Mediterranean crop that is a thistle (as is artichoke) and you the leaf petiole (like rhubarb). Not sure how it will do here-but we have about 50 plants growing.]

Swiss chard, along with kale, mustard greens and collard greens, is one of several leafy green vegetables often referred to as "greens". It is a tall leafy green vegetable with a thick, crunchy stalk that comes in white, red or yellow with wide fan-like green leaves. Chard belongs to the same family as beets and spinach and shares a similar taste profile: it has the bitterness of beet greens and the slightly salty flavor of spinach leaves. Both

the leaves and stalk of chard are edible, although the stems vary in texture with the white ones being the most tender. Swiss chard is extremely versatile

Health Benefits

Swiss chard has concentrations of vitamin K (306.3% of the daily value in one cup, cooked), vitamin A, vitamin C, magnesium, manganese, potassium, iron, vitamin E, and dietary fiber. Swiss chard also emerges as a very good or good source of copper, calcium, vitamin B2, vitamin B6, protein, phosphorous, vitamin B1, zinc, folate, biotin, niacin and pantothenic acid.

Use

Swiss chard can be used interchangeably with spinach, raw or cooked. It is also my favorite when “greens” are called for in just about any recipe as I have never found bitterness in this vegetable (though the formal explanations claim it is detectable). Chard holds its shape better than spinach when cooked and takes a bit longer, so is excellent as a stand-alone or in stir fries because it really doesn’t get mushy. I cook the leaves and stems together (cutting the stems into small chunks) but many recipes call for the leaves or stems exclusively. Chard stalks are good slow-cooked or baked with a cheese sauce.

Shang Kim chi

Cooking Light, March 2003

14 cups coarsely chopped napa cabbage (about 2 pounds)

3 Tablespoons kosher salt

1 Tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted

2-1/2 Tablespoons sambal oelek or Thai Chili paste

2 Tablespoons minced fresh garlic

2 teaspoons dark sesame oil

1. Place cabbage and salt in a large bowl, tossing gently to combine. Weigh down cabbage with another bowl. Let stand at room temperature 3 ours, tossing occasionally. Drain and rinse, with cold water. Drain and squeeze dry.
2. Combine cabbage, sesame seeds, and remaining ingredients. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving.

Yield: 4 cups

Garlicky Sautéed Greens

Prevention Magazine

6 garlic cloves, sliced

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

16 c (packed) stemmed and roughly chopped Swiss chard (about 5 large bunches)

½ tsp red pepper flakes

½ tsp kosher salt

Heat garlic and oil in large skillet over medium-low heat until garlic begins to turn golden, about 3 minutes. Transfer mixture to small bowl and set aside.

Add greens red-pepper flakes and salt to skillet. Using tongs, turn greens until wilted enough to fit in pan. Raise heat to medium, cover and cook 7-10 minutes, tossing. Transfer greens to a colander to drain. Return greens to pan and toss with reserved garlic and oil mixture. Refrigerate leftover greens in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

