



Spring Greens CSA: Week 4



Our Green Magic Broccoli has been attacked! The culprit you might ask? Richardson's Ground Squirrels are to blame. Commonly just called "gophers", Richardson's Ground Squirrels love to munch on Brassica family plants. To prevent them from eating our crops we use row cover to discourage them and traps to kill them. Though they often only eat plants on the end of our rows, they can do costly damage!

"So, what's in the CSA for this week?"

spring greens: week 4

We could not be more thrilled to provide you with a bountiful share of hand harvested, hand washed, passion borne fresh vegetables

Deluxe Baby Lettuce Mix
Spicy Mix
Emperor (F1) Spinach
Victoria Head Lettuce
Jericho Romaine Head Lettuce*
Lacinato Kale
Red Ace (F1) Beets
Napoli (F1) Carrots*
Roxanne (F1) Radishes
Parsley

* = new this week

Things to Remember

- CSA pickup is on Wednesday from 4pm-6pm.
- We do not distribute our CSA's in boxes, so please bring a reusable produce bag to transport your share home in.
- If you can't make it during this time, please email or call us to arrange another time to come get your share. Contact info can be found at the footer of this email.

Tool of the Week

By Zach H.



The scythe is a very old agricultural hand tool used for mowing grass or reaping crops. The scythe consists of a long shaft with offset handles attached, called a snath, and a large curved blade at the end. Some scythes are simple with straight shafts and others are “S” curved. The handles are placed on the upper and middle part of the shaft at right angles to better allow the user to cut more accurately and efficiently. The blades are kept very sharp by peening and hoening. Peening is done using a hammer to form the desired profile needed depending on what is being cut. The blade is then fine tuned frequently with a whetstone to keep it sharp.

The scythe is used in mowing whatever crop is being harvested. The mower stands parallel to the crop holding the top handle in his left hand and the middle handle in his right hand. With the uncut grass to the right, the mower twists their body from right to left keeping the blade low and parallel to the ground cutting the grass. If done correctly, the steady swing of the blade from right to left will have cut the grass and placed the bunch to the left, in front of the mower making it easier for collection. Scything is usually done by a team of mowers that start at the edge of a field and work clockwise inward until they reach the middle.

The scythe was first invented around 500 BC and had made its way to Europe by the 12th century. The scythe initially was used for cutting hay but eventually replaced the sickle for harvesting crops given that it was more efficient and ergonomic. Today it has been replaced by modern lawn mowers and combines. The scythe may be an old and outdated tool but it is still an interesting tool to use. Gives a person today a feel for what farming was like for humans for thousands of years.



Scything Activity

by Mac Burgess

One of my first purchases at MSU was a collection of top-quality scythes from scythesupply.com featuring forged blades from Austria and Ash snaths from Maine, USA, sized to fit anyone from 5'3" to 6'3" tall. You might think of a scythe as an archaic tool, but spend an hour or two with a good one and I assure you you'll have a new appreciation for the value of a keen edge in this era where the more common approach seems to be to apply more horsepower to a crude edge. While I don't propose going entirely back to hand labor as the answer to our sustainability questions, having an appreciation for what would be involved is valuable and the exercise is popular with students. Here at Towne's Harvest we use our scythes once a year to harvest cover crops for the purpose of making compost. Few organic farms make much of their own compost anymore, and even we don't make nearly enough to meet all of our needs, but making an attempt always proves informative.

Student of the Week



Lennon Lott

Raised in northern California, Lennon grew up in the suburbs outside of San Francisco. Far from any farmer background, she enjoyed her time at the beach and sailing up and down the West Coast. Her interest in small scale organic farming came from her high school's ¼ acre certified Organic farm. There she gained the experience and passion for sustainable farming that would bring her to Montana State where she now studies Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems in the Sustainable Crop Production option. Her favorite vegetable is Butternut Squash. Lennon hopes to bring sustainable farming to other countries across latin america where she can also enjoy her favorite activities such as hiking and sailing!

Crop of the Week

Zach H.

Radishes (*Raphanus sativus*) are an annual or biennial root vegetable of the Brassicaceae family that were first domesticated in Europe and are now consumed worldwide. They are usually eaten raw but can also be cooked. Radishes come in many varieties, differing in size, color, and length of time to maturity. They can be split up into 4 main categories; spring, summer, winter, and seed pod varieties. Spring and summer radishes include many different varieties and are usually small with short cultivation times of 3 to 4 week, radishes are considered spring radishes when they are planted in cooler weather. Winter radishes come in round to elongated forms and are grown around the world. Seed pod varieties are usually used as future seed but the seeds are edible and sometimes used in salads. 7

million tons of radishes are produced worldwide every year, accounting for 2% of global vegetable production.

Radishes need friable, well drained soils and can be sown at any time during the season starting in the early spring. Radish seeds need to be planted to a depth of half an inch in 2-3" inch bands spaced 1' apart. Radishes can be affected by hot, dry weather and should be grown rapidly with plenty of moisture. Floating row cover needs to be used at the time of planting to control pest such as flea beetles and cabbage root maggots. Radishes make good companion plants because of their pungent odors help to deter pests and can also be used as trap crops to lure pest away from other crops. Radishes seem to thrive best when matched up with cucumbers. Radishes need to be harvested within 3-4 weeks to avoid pithiness.

Once bunched or topped, radishes can be kept for 3-4 weeks at 32 degrees Fahrenheit at relative humidity and in a breathable storage container. Radishes can also be grown in the late season and harvested in December. They handle cold temperatures well for the most part but can become spongy if strong freezes happen repeatedly.

Radishes have a sharp peppery flavor and are usually consumed raw in salads but can also be cooked, being used in variety of soups or as side dishes. The entire plant can be consumed. The taproot is what is usually consumed but the leafy tops are also edible and so are the seeds. Radishes play an important part in many different cultures around the world. The daikon varieties are highly celebrated in the East, Southeast, and South parts of Asia.

Bringing it to your Table

by Jennifer M.

Roasted Beets With Balsamic Orange Glaze With Kale and Beet Greens

Adapted from Elise Bauer at the "Simply Recipes" blog

Ingredients

- 2 pounds of cubed beets, medium cubes, stems removed
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- Pinch of salt
- ½ cup of balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons of sugar
- Orange zest, 2 teaspoons more or less to taste
- ½ teaspoon of black pepper more or less to taste
- 1 tablespoon of garlic (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Cube the beets and set aside the greens.
3. Mix all of the ingredients listed above together, except for the beets.
4. Once oven is heated, place beets in glass baking dish, then pour the balsamic mixture over the beets. It will not submerge them, but they should all get a coating of the balsamic, if not, mix thoroughly; cover the dish with tin foil.
5. Bake until a fork goes through the beets easily, about an hour.
6. Wilt the kale and beet greens, or prepare otherwise to your liking.
7. Allow beets to cool and serve on top of the salad.
8. Enjoy!



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