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Spring Greens: Week 3

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Spring Greens: Week 3



Last week we received a heavy rainfall, totaling about 1.3 inches for the week. That's a lot of water! Our crops need about an inch of water a week right now, so this rainfall was enough for us not to worry about irrigation for a little bit. This week there's a forecast of 70's and sunny, and with that combination of rain and sun we're looking at some awesome plant growth.

At the end of the last week the students and staff planted 6 rows of winter squash and pumpkins out in the field knowing well that Friday's low was in frost territory. After reviewing options with the class, we all decided that we should not row cover all of the squash due to the amount of labor and materials required. We row covered one row to give the students the experience of applying row cover to a 200ft bed of plants, and as an experiment to see if it made a difference. We ended up having a light frost on Friday night/ Saturday morning and were worried about the squash's well being. We nervously approached them Monday morning to find that all of our squash is alive and well, but the squash with no row cover protecting it had light frost damage which is nothing that it can't bounce back from! We're thrilled that our

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[ransplants made it and that we'll hopefully get winter squash a couple weeks earlier than if it had been frost killed.](#)
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Student Biography

by Darlene Martinez



Reece Summers is a non-traditional, non-degree graduate enrolled in the Sustainable Food and Bioenergy Systems program known as Towne's Harvest Garden (SFBS 296). Reece began his career as the Curator of the MSU Museum of the Rockies. He later moved to Utah to serve as the Curator of the Utah State University American West Heritage Center. He also served as Curator at the Great Plains Art Museum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Born in Tombstone, Arizona, he along with his wife have returned to Bozeman to retire and be near their granddaughter. Reece has always been a gardener. In addition to gardening, Reece

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fun" in his retirement.

What's in the CSA this week?

Spring Greens: Week 3

Bright Lights Swiss Chard*
 Toscano, Winterbor* (F1), and Darkibor* (F1) Kale Medley
 Black Summer (F1) Pac Choi
 Winner (F1) Kohlrabi*
 Hakurei (F1) Salad Turnips
 Concept Batavian Head Lettuce*
 Minuet (F1) Chinese Cabbage
 or
 Tiara (F1) Mini Green Cabbage*
 Spicy Micro Mix
 Arugula
 Lemonbalm

* = new variety or item

Do I Need to Bring Anything?



Towne's Harvest Garden is trying to use the least amount of plastic as possible - therefore, we ask that you please bring your own large reusable grocery bags and small produce bags every week. We will have extra produce bags on hand, but we'd love it if we could reduce the amount we provide to zero. Other than that, just bring us any questions you might have and a smiling face!

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Tractor Transplanter

We did a lot of planting this week at Towne's Harvest Garden! In this video you can see our students and tractor transplanter in action. This is a ride-on tractor implement that we use to pop onion starts into the ground. Two people sit on the implement, systematically placing a single onion start in the rotating wheel that plants the onion in the ground. As you can see in the video, the wheel moves quickly, and all of the onion starts need to be pulled apart by the students making it a fast paced, attentive job that can be likened to a classic, real life arcade game. This tractor implement makes transplanting onion starts a quick task instead of a grueling day of tirelessly bending over and putting them in by hand.

Favorite Veggie Report: Kohlrabi

by Dylan Fishman

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Kohlrabi (*Brassica oleracea*) is a vegetable in the cabbage family that gets a little less attention than its other cruciferous cousins. The kohlrabi plant, like the rest of the Brassica family, is a very cold-hardy, pest resistant plant, making it a pleasure to grow in the spring and fall here in Montana.

The Winner (F1) kohlrabi that we're giving you this week for CSA was seeded in our greenhouse on March 15th, and then transplanted into one of our high tunnels on April 23rd. The low levels of light in the early spring slow down the growth of the plant, but when light is plentiful (around this time of year) the plant quickly catches up. To put this in perspective, we transplanted another variety (quickstar F1) of kohlrabi outside without any season extension tools, and it's almost caught up to the kohlrabi we're giving you now. If the outdoor plants just catch up, you may wonder why we start it so early and transplant into a hoop house. The early seeding and transplant dates allow us to put kohlrabi, and other veggies like it, in our CSA 1-2 weeks earlier than what is possible with planting outside. There are other associated risks with planting brassica family plants like kohlrabi outside too - one of the major risks being that flea beetles and deer, pests on brassicas, tend to do damage to young plants outdoors. Our outdoor planting of kohlrabi was affected by flea beetle damage, but we decided to wait and see what would happen if we let nature run its course. In 5 more days time, the kohlrabi has grown enough to be able to outgrow the flea beetles and continue growing on schedule.

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The entire kohlrabi plant is edible, and thoroughly delicious! Although the main spectacle in the kohlrabi show is its enlarged stem at the base of the plant, both the stalks and leaves are also fine delicacies that capture the essence of what spring greens really means. The enlarged kohlrabi stem at the base is a crunchy treat that can be eaten both raw and cooked. I tend to eat it raw with hummus, or another kind of dip, but when I have extra I cook it in stir-fries, vegetable roasts, and soups ([cream of kohlrabi soup](#) is a MUST try). The leaves can be used as a green burrito wrap, put in a smoothie, or added to any cooked dish in place of kale, collards, or spinach.

Kohlrabi has just hit the main stage in America as it's now become more and more available in grocery stores that emphasize local, diverse, and organic foods. Kohlrabi is an amazing crop for producers to grow, due to previously mentioned hardiness and pest resistance, but also because when the leaves are taken off the plant (we call this bulk kohlrabi) the kohlrabi can be stored in a cooler for a month or more making it a valuable storage crop. If one were to truly eat locally and seasonally in Montana, Kohlrabi would be in your household due to its ability to store through the winter months when many of the other greens have already faded away.



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Contact Dylan Fishman at
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