

S U M M E R 2 0 1 3

The Dirt

Towne's Harvest Garden July, 2013



Towne's Harvest CSA Summer & Fall Share Week 1

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to the start of the Summer and Fall share option of your Towne's Harvest CSA membership. I hope everyone had a wonderful 4th of July celebrating our nation's birthday. The crops at the farm took a little bit of a beating due to the incredible storm last Saturday but they are recovering and healing quickly. The good news is that the heat from last week quickly ripened our strawberry crop so they will be ready for your enjoyment this week. I cannot wait to see the old and new faces on Wednesday.

Cheers,

Tim, Alex, and Chaz



Berry Preservation

The culprits behind berry mold are the evil, microscopic mold spores waiting to make a home of the friendly, moist skin of your gorgeous berries.

Fortunately, there is a simple way to kill off the mold spores and bacteria that find your berries as delicious as you do. It might seem counterintuitive to wash your berries before you're ready to eat them. One of the cardinal rules of keeping berries mold-free is to leave them unwashed until the moment before consumption. But by washing your berries in a solution of vinegar and water, you can extend their shelf-life by days (sometimes even weeks!). In a large bowl, make a diluted vinegar bath -- 1 cup vinegar, 3 cups water -- and give your berries a dunk. The vinegar will eliminate any pesky mold and bacteria. Next, drain your berries in a colander and rinse them under cool running water. This guarantees that you won't be able to taste any lingering traces of vinegar later on.

Week 1 Produce

Strawberries

The garden strawberry was first bred in Brittany, France, in the 1750s via a cross of *Fragaria virginiana* from eastern North America and *Fragaria chiloensis*, which was brought from Chile by Amédée-François Frézier in 1714 (UCLA, 2009).

Strawberries with Lavender Biscuits

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 cup white flour
 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon fresh lavender flowers
 (less if dried)
 8 tablespoons cold butter
 1 cup heavy cream
 2 quarts fresh strawberries
 2-4 tablespoons brown sugar
 6-8 tablespoons creme fraiche
 fresh mint

Directions

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine flours, sugar, baking powder, salt and lavender flowers in bowl of a food processor and pulse a couple of times to mix. Drop in butter, one tablespoon at a time while pulsing blade. Just mix until dough resembles coarse meal. Slowly add cream, pulsing, until just mixed. Dough will be tacky. Drop 8 large scoops on ungreased cookie sheet, (optional: brush top with a bit of heavy cream and sprinkle with sugar) and bake 18-20 mins. When done, remove from pan and let cool on a wire rack.

While the biscuits are baking, prepare your strawberries. Rinse the berries, stem and hull them. I usually cut them in half because they are small to begin with. Toss the berries with a few tablespoons of brown sugar - this part is a matter of taste and sweetness of the berries. Try not to handle the berries too much, you don't want to mush them, but you do want the berries natural juices to come out. That's it.

Now it's time to assemble your Strawberries with Lavender Biscuits. I cut my biscuits in half and serve in a bowl. Lay the bottom of the biscuit in your bowl. Scoop some berries and their juice over that. Add a dollop of creme fraiche (again, this too can be sweetened a little, depending on personal taste, I like the sourness) and top with the other half of the biscuit. I like to garnish with some fresh mint and a lavender flower.



Garlic Scapes

Garlic Scape Pesto

Ingredients

1 cup (or less) freshly grated Parmesan cheese or other sharp Italian cheese
 1–2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime or lemon juice, adjusted to taste
 1/4 pound roughly chopped scapes
 1/2 cup olive oil
 Salt to taste

Directions

Puree scapes, olive oil, and juice in a blender or food processor until nearly smooth. (You can make a smooth paste if you prefer, but most people like a little texture in the pesto.) Gently stir in the cheese or gingerly pulse the cheese into the mixture; take it easy as you mix in the cheese to avoid making the pesto gummy by overblending. Taste and then adjust juice and salt to taste.

Store in the refrigerator to use within two or three days; freeze for longer storage. Scape pesto freezes well, and it holds its appealing green color when frozen even better than the traditional basil pesto.



Lettuce

Cilantro Chicken Salad in Lettuce Cups

Serves 2

Ingredients

1 breast of chicken (preferably organic)
 4 sprigs cilantro
 1/4 carrot (julienned)
 1/4 cucumber (julienned)
 2 leaves Napa cabbage (julienned)
 3-4 green onions (chopped)
 2 tablespoons mayonaise
 Sea salt
 Fresh ground pepper
 3-4 leaves romaine lettuce



Directions:

Mix all ingredients (except lettuce leaves) in a large bowl. Adjust for salt and pepper. Spoon into lettuce cups. Serve.

Braising Mix

Ingredients

1/2 lb greens
 1 tbs olive oil (or any cooking kind)
 1/2 onion diced
 4 cloves garlic minced
 1 medium carrot grated
 1 apple grated
 1/2-3/4 c. liquid (water, wine, broth)
 1 cup frozen or 1 can corn
 smoked paprika to taste
 garlic salt to taste

Radish

Radish Chips

Ingredients

Radishes
 Olive oil
 Salt

Directions

Thinly slice radishes. Then, toss radishes with olive oil and salt. Bake at 350 degrees for twelve minutes.

Directions

Wash the greens and take out the hard middle stems. Eat oil in a skillet or fry pan. Add onion, garlic, apple and carrot. Cook until onions are tender. Add the corn and cook for a few minutes. Add about 1/2 c. liquid to start. I like using chicken broth. Add the greens. If you are using big pieces then cover and let simmer until greens are wilted. Little pieces cook fine without covering. Add smoked paprika and garlic salt and stir until combined.

Chard

Chard is a type of beet, which, along with spinach, is a plant in the goosefoot family; so named because some of the plants in this category have leaves shaped like their namesake. Unlike traditional beets, chard roots are inedible. Chard is prized for its large leaves and crunchy stalks.

Spinach

Spinach is a native plant of Persia (modern day Iran). It was introduced to China in the 7th century. It was most probably brought to Europe in about the 12th century and to the US in 1806. Reflecting its origin, spinach is still widely known in China as "the Persian Green".

Swiss Chard and Spinach Pasta

Ingredients

8 ounces fresh Swiss chard, chopped coarsely
 8 ounces fresh spinach, chopped coarsely
 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided evenly
 1 clove garlic, minced
 2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
 2 tablespoons golden raisins
 8 ounces dry pasta
 2 ounces Romano cheese, grated

Rinse vegetables and pat dry on paper towels. Cut off lower part of stems. With your fingers, roll leaves and chop into bite-sized sections. Bring large pot of water to rapid boil. Toss pasta into pot. Add dash of salt and a few drops of olive oil. Cook until tender, about 12 minutes. Turn off heat. Drain contents and return pasta to pot. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in large skillet. Sauté garlic over medium-high heat about two minutes. Add remaining olive oil along with spinach and chard. Stir and reduce heat when leaves begin to wilt, two to three minutes. Add pine nuts and raisins to frying pan. Stir gently about one minute and remove from heat. Add contents of frying pan to pot of cooked pasta. Blend contents over low heat. Serve warm.