



Greens — Eating, cooking, storing ~ Michele Roy

Greens are a big part of the vegetable mix in a CSA, especially early in the season. They are a favorite of ours—the short cooking time and super nutritional benefits make them real winners in the kitchen. I always swear I can feel the vitamins hitting my bloodstream as soon as I eat them.

This week we have an assortment of greens, and you'll probably get a sampling of most of them this week and next. If you are new to cooking and eating greens, please take the time to read through this column, especially the last section on freezing them for future use!

Kale is a member of the brassica family (as are turnip greens). These have a pretty good storage life in the refrigerator. We have 4 varieties this year: White Russian, Red Russian, Winterbor, and Beedy's Camden. It has a relatively long cooking time which brings out the sweetness yet does not turn to mush. We especially like to add it to soups.

Beet Greens, Swiss Chard, and Spinach are members of the Goosefoot Family. They should be used promptly so they don't spoil, and are best cooked lightly. Sautéed in butter or steamed until leaves are bright green are our favorite ways to cook these. Small, raw leaves are great in salads.

Basic cooking instructions for all greens: Wash leaves just before cooking. On small greens you can leave the stems on, but on larger ones remember that thick stems cook more slowly than the leaves. Fold the leaves in half along the stem and cut the stem out. After you have a bunch, stack the leaves up and slice into 1" ribbons. Chop the stems up and cook them a few minutes before adding the leaves, or save them for a different meal.

Sautéing the greens in a pan with olive oil, garlic or onion, and a pinch of salt,

with perhaps some soy sauce splashed in, is the easiest, quickest way to cook them. They add wonderful color when served with pasta, beans, rice or grains. Leftovers can be added to enchiladas, quesadillas, crepes, lasagna, or even macaroni and cheese. Our apprentices regularly sauté greens and onions before adding eggs for their breakfast.

Greens are easy to freeze for future use. Simply wash the leaves and put them into a steamer basket in a pot with the

water already boiling. Put the lid on and steam for 2 minutes. Dump greens into a colander; as soon as you can handle them (mixing with ice cubes can help—I hate to plunge into cold water as is usually suggested, because of all those nutrients draining away!), put in a freezer bag (suck the air out of the bag before sealing), then put the sealed bag in ice water to cool down more. It's always a good idea to label and date before putting in the freezer.



Soon the great unveiling will take place. Under all this row cover are summer squashes and cucumber plants, bulging up against the fabric. We've peeked in and there are blossoms forming already! No sign yet of the dreaded striped cucumber beetle. Row cover is our greatest tool against these pests.

Is the price of food the problem? ~ Molly King

One of the major obstacles for the developing local foods movement in the United States today is price. We, as consumers, are used to buying food well under its actual value, taking for granted the enormous effort and resources that go into each individual raisin that we pop into our mouths. Not only are we used to these artificially low prices, but many of us depend on them. When you're living on minimum wage or less, cheap food can be a blessing.

If we want our food system to be just, however, we need to be accountable for each step within that system. We need to start thinking about not only the taste of that final raisin, but of the plastic container, the truck driver and the gasoline, the worker who packages the raisins, the farmer, and the water required to irrigate the vine. I'm sure you've heard this list before, and I'm also pretty sure you can imagine a few more links to add to this chain. Even

(Continued on page 2)

Food safety — on our own ~by Denis Thoet

How safe is the food you get from Long Meadow Farm?

On a scale of 1 to 10, it's a 10. All greens and root crops are washed in well water that is inspected annually.

All of our seed comes from Fedco or Johnny's so we are sure it hasn't been genetically modified, even if some of it isn't organic.

All manure used as fertilizer has been composted for a year — nine months longer than the MOFGA standard. We

don't used pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers, period.

So the chance of e-coli creeping into your spinach or tomatoes or peppers is virtually nil. However, if it ever did, you would know where to go to complain, and we would correct whatever mistake had been made.

In the supermarket, however, you are on your own, or so I thought until recently. Yes, organic produce is always labeled "organic" but who knows what kinds of poisons were sprayed on eve-

rything else and how do you know if the corn or bananas or the soy in tofu is grown from genetically modified seed?

One clue, check the PLU number on the package. PLU, I just found out, means Price Look Up. It corresponds to a bar code with four or five digits under it. There are actually two bar codes side by side and I'm assuming that the one on the left describes the origin of the package, but that may be assuming too much.

In an article by Dr. M.J. Wegman posted May 30 (TheNewWellness.com), here's what to look for:

- a 4-digit number means it's conventionally grown;
- a five digit number beginning with nine means it's organic;
- a five digit number beginning with 8 means it's genetically modified.

This was confirmed by Hannaford nutritionist Beth Williams.

Just one little problem: it's easy to find four digit numbers for conventionally grown food or five digit numbers beginning with 9 for organically grown, but I challenge anyone to find the magic five-digit number beginning with eight for genetically modified.

Why? Apparently growers are not required to put the numbers on the packages and they aren't.

Solution? Assume corn, soy, canola oil (the most common GM products) are contaminated and don't buy them until a labeling system is in place.



Trellising the tomatoes — Our best tomatoes come from the greenhouse.

Cilantro is ready to pick. If you see a sign up, the bed is open for picking! Dill and mint are also ready; parsley and basil are coming soon!



Carrot Salad with Lime and Cilantro

4 medium carrots
1 Tbl. fresh lime juice
1 tsp. olive oil
1/8 tsp. grated fresh lime zest
2 Tbs chopped cilantro leaves
Cilantro for garnish

Finely shred carrots and in a bowl toss together with remaining ingredients and salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with cilantro sprigs.

(Molly, continued from page 1)

within a local food system each innocent tomato sitting at the farmers' market has countless silent inputs.

This leaves us with a pretty damning contradiction: one, that affordable food is more accessible, and two, that many of our food prices today aren't high enough to account for the immense inputs. Low food prices are both good and bad, depending on who you ask. And this, this tightly wound contradiction, is my personal wall. I've run into this wall many times, while reading books, while writing papers, while talking with farmers. And I haven't been able to get past it. I've even run around it a few times, but it's a long and well fortified wall. This wall, this contradiction, is what the term "food justice" means to me. How can we reconcile both sides? How can we feed everyone, everyone, in a way that is both socially and environmentally just?

I haven't figured out any quick solution

to this disconnect. I personally think the problem lies in a living wage gap not only for the producers, but for the consumers. Consumers, in their own jobs, should be paid enough to buy healthy and environmentally responsible food. That is the only way the consumers will be able to meet the price that allows farmers, in turn, to live a healthy and environmentally responsible life. The bottom line is that our national wage should be high enough for both the consumer and the producer. Bringing everyone up to a living wage cannot and will not happen instantly.

I haven't found a way to get around my wall. But I have found a few leaks. There are, I think, a few ways we can work towards a more just and inclusive food system. Next week, if you'll indulge me, I'll talk about one.

*For more information on a living wage, check out <http://www.livingwagecampaign.org/>