

THE TIPI TIMES

May 19, 2011, week 1 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Asparagus, 1.25 lb
Green leaf lettuce
Red leaf lettuce
Arugula
Radishes
Green garlic
Button mushrooms, 12 oz.
Chives
Rhubarb, 2 lb.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Asparagus, bok choy,
spinach, lettuce, rhubarb,
green garlic and more

*depending on weather, critters
& other forces of nature.

WELCOME TO OUR CSA. Many of you are long-term members of our CSA. Welcome back, we appreciate your commitment to our farm. New members, I hope you enjoy your first season with our CSA. Don't hesitate to contact us when you have questions. Our CSA is not sold out yet, so we still have room for your friends if they are interested.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The first few boxes of the season are always the lightest. Every-other-week (EOW) members, do not worry that you have signed up for the wrong share. Later deliveries will be bigger.
- We will post our newsletter on our website (www.tipiproduce.com) on Wednesday night. This means that you can get access to the newsletter even if our email communication falters. We will continue to distribute a weekly reminder by email but find it increasingly difficult to get past all the spam filters.
- EOW and weekly members, we assume that you read all the newsletters, even on weeks that you do not receive a box. We rely on the newsletter to communicate with everyone. You do not want to miss important information, or a good recipe, or a chance to purchase extra tomatoes.
- We will be using two email addresses this year:
tipi@litewire.net (this address is new since last year)
csa@tipiproduce.com

Please add both addresses to the address book in your email program. Then (under 'preferences'), make sure that you allow 'messages from senders in your address book to be exempt from junk mail filtering.' The exact language will differ for each email program. I am eager to get our emails past your spam filters.

"WILL THERE BE ENOUGH PRODUCE TO FILL THE BOXES ON MAY 19?"

That was my daily question for Steve during this cool, damp spring, as I debated whether to delay the start of our CSA. Each time, Steve reassured me that we would be ready. We've been able to keep to our planting schedule. Once again, our farm's sandy-loam soils have been a blessing as rainy weather does not slow us down for long. After 35 years of farming, Steve has good instincts about how the crops will develop. My 12 years haven't given me as much confidence yet.

One look in your box will show you that the produce is ready. Not only is it ready, but everything is good quality because cool spring weather promotes tender growth. We think there will be other benefits from the cool weather. It has slowed down the asparagus harvests. In most years, we harvest hundreds of pounds of asparagus before the CSA season begins, then scramble to find a place to sell it. The cool weather pushed the entire asparagus harvest into the CSA season this year, which means more asparagus for you folks. Similarly, our chives are ready to harvest for this first CSA box, instead of already being too strongly flavored and past their peak.

Expect some damaged tips on this week's lettuce and arugula. We kept the lettuce under rowcover longer than usual this spring, to hurry its growth. The lightweight fabric acts as a mini-greenhouse and protects the arugula from insects. During the latest bout of windy weather, the rowcover battered the tops of the plants. We use rowcover every year because the benefits are worth it. The damage is not bad, and we've sent two lettuces, so you'll have plenty for salads.

Our workcrew has trickled back to work over the last two months. A few folks worked through the winter, then more joined us as we began growing plants in the greenhouses. We only hired one new employee this season, out

of 22 workers. Everyone else is back after two to fifteen years working for us. There's a great sense of camaraderie among the group after this long together. As I write this newsletter on Wednesday, everyone is eagerly diving into the first harvests. *Beth*

VEGGIE NOTES. This is really a salad box, with fresh lettuce, arugula, radishes, mushrooms and chives. Some of the produce will need careful washing this week. We wash everything here at the farm, but there's still grit in the lettuce and the asparagus from the recent rains.

Asparagus - Enjoy this spring treat! You will receive either green or purple asparagus. The purple variety will turn dark green when cooked, and the flavor is almost identical to normal green asparagus. The best way to wash asparagus is to submerge it in water, soak briefly, then swish vigorously and pull out of the water with the tips pointing down. The draining action helps pull the grit out of the asparagus tips. Repeat several times. **Storage:** Asparagus is perishable, so eat it as soon as possible. If you must store it for a while, wrap the bundle in a paper towel and then store it loosely in a plastic bag. The asparagus tips tend to rot if in direct contact with the plastic bag. We snap our asparagus at harvest, rather than cutting it. Therefore, there is no need to snap the stalks to remove fibrous ends. For the same reason, it is not necessary to peel the asparagus stalks. It's OK to trim the end a bit.

Cooking: If your asparagus stalks vary greatly in size, you will want to cook the thicker ones longer. Put the asparagus in a steamer pot over water. Alternatively, you can lay spears flat in the bottom of a broad pan, with ½ inch of water. Cover and steam over medium heat until just tender. Use two forks or a spatula to turn the asparagus during cooking, rotating the bottom spears in the water to the top. Drain and serve. Also excellent if dressed with vinaigrette and broiled or grilled.

Green garlic - (looks like scallions) - Last fall, we planted small heads of garlic. The cloves sprouted and grew into the stalks we've sent today. If left to grow, the fat bulb on this week's garlic would divide and form the usual cluster of cloves in a garlic bulb. Green garlic is more pungent than scallions, so slice thinly and use sparingly when raw. It mellows nicely when cooked. The easiest way to use it is to chop and add to any cooked dish that would benefit from garlic. You will have to peel off and discard the outer layer. Use the white bulbs and pale green stems. Do not use the leaves or dark green stems, as these are too fibrous.

Lettuce - You will receive green leaf and red leaf lettuce this week.

Arugula - (small bunch of green leaves with pungent scent) - This is good mixed with lettuce or spinach in salads or in cooked dishes such as lasagne or quiche. This batch of arugula is very tender and should be eaten raw for best enjoyment. I really like it on sandwiches. Cover and refrigerate.

Button mushrooms - These organic mushrooms were grown by Mary & Ed Tylka of Hidden Valley Mushrooms.

Rhubarb - Refrigerate in a plastic bag. FYI, 2 lb of rhubarb will yield about 6 to 6.5 cups when chopped.

Stewed rhubarb: This is the simplest way to prepare rhubarb. Chop rhubarb into one inch chunks. Stir over medium heat with a small amount of water in the bottom of the pan. The rhubarb will release moisture as it cooks. Stew until it softens and falls apart. Sweeten to taste with honey or sugar. Eat warm on its own, over vanilla ice cream, on pancakes, etc.

You can still read New York Times recipes via links in our newsletters.

The New York Times now charges for access to their online newspaper, but continues to offer unlimited access to articles via links. This means that you can get to NYT recipes by following links in our newsletters, even if you cannot access the recipes directly from the NYT.com website. You may be required to register once, but it is free. I could simply avoid NYT recipes in our newsletter. However, I've recommended many NYT recipes in the past, so our newsletter archives will be full of them (once I finish prepping the archives!)

New York Times Recipes for Green Garlic Martha Rose Shulman ran a series on green garlic just last week in her "Cooking for Health" column. This box contains the ingredients for just the first recipe but the other recipes are easily adapted and might be useful with next week's box. Here are links to the article and recipes:

[A Lighter, Lovelier Garlic](#), article about green garlic

[Asparagus with Green Garlic](#), recipe

[Rice Bowl with Spinach or Pea Tendrils](#), recipe

[Beet Greens, Green Garlic and Barley Gratin](#), recipe

[Whole Wheat Spaghetti with Green Garlic and Chicory](#), recipe

Rhubarb Muffin Cake

This recipe is adapted from the 'Basic Buttermilk Muffins' recipe in Deborah Madison's "Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone." We included that recipe in our first newsletter last year, adapted as "Fruit Muffins." Since last spring, we've transformed the muffin recipe into a cake recipe, which we now call 'muffin cake' in our house. Our daughter Sophie and her friend Isabel began competing to see who could stuff the most fruit and chocolate chips into the muffins. We discovered that the muffins begin falling apart at 3 cups of fruit. (The original recipe called for 1 cup of fruit). At that point, it's better to pour the batter in a pan and bake it. We find that 3 cups works well for rhubarb, but you can increase the fruit to 4 cups if you use mixed fruit.

This has become our family's standard whole-grain cake recipe, good with most types of fruit that are not too wet. Use the larger amount of brown sugar when using rhubarb. Sprinkle with a little brown sugar or coarse-grained baker's sugar to dress up the cake.

2 1/2 cups whole-wheat pastry or all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 to 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
3/4 cup chopped roasted almonds (optional)
3 handfuls chocolate chips (optional)

2 eggs
1-1/3 cups buttermilk, or yogurt thinned with water to the consistency of buttermilk
1/3 cup canola oil
2 tsp. vanilla extract

3 to 4 cups of any of the following fresh or frozen fruits:
raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, finely diced rhubarb or apples or pears or cranberries. There's no need to thaw frozen fruit; just add it directly to the batter. Whole frozen cranberries work well, especially in combination with frozen raspberries.

Preheat the oven to 375oF. Oil or butter a 13x9 inch cake pan. Mix the dry ingredients in one bowl and the wet ingredients in a second bowl. Combine them with a few swift strokes, then add the fruit. Stir the batter up from the bottom of the bowl to mix any pockets of flour or fruit. Stir gently when using fragile fruits like raspberries. Don't overbeat. The batter will seem lumpy. Fill the cake pan and smooth the batter into the corners. Bake in the upper third of the oven until browned and well risen, about 35 to 45 minutes. The cake is ready when a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. You will need the longer cooking times when using frozen fruit.

[Green Garlic-Chive Buttermilk Dressing](#) If you buy buttermilk to make the cake recipe above, you may as well make this yummy dressing recipe too. It's good with just green garlic or chives, if you do not have both ingredients on hand. Great on salad or for dipping asparagus.

1 Tbsp. mayonnaise
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1 Tbsp. finely minced chives
1 tsp. green garlic, thinly sliced and then minced
1/2 cup lowfat buttermilk
no salt

Mix all ingredient together, then taste for salt and green garlic levels. The garlic will get stronger as the dressing sits. Add a second Tbsp. of mayonnaise if you feel the dressing is too thin. The buttermilk we use is already salted, so we do not add additional salt.

[Moist Buttermilk Cornbread](#). If you still have leftover buttermilk, you can make our favorite cornbread recipe. It calls for 1.5 cups buttermilk to prepare an 8 inch pan of cornbread.