

THE TIPI TIMES

June 2, 2011, week 3 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Asparagus, 1.2 lb
Spinach, 1.9 lb
White salad turnips
Escarole
Red Romaine OR
red bibb lettuce
Scallions

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Asparagus, a big bag of spinach, white salad turnips, scallions, etc

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

JUNE 1 PAYMENTS. Many of you paid us with checks dated June 1. I will deposit those checks on Friday June 3. Please be prepared.

BUY A SALAD SPINNER TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR SPINACH, LETTUCE.

Do you need to re-arrange your kitchen to accommodate a CSA membership? Of course not! However, I encourage you to purchase a salad spinner. The spinach and lettuce we harvest for you are still wet from washing when we pack the CSA boxes. Try this technique to keep your salad greens fresh longer: separate the leaves, wash them and spin them dry in a salad spinner. Store in a closed bag or container in the fridge. They will stay fresh much longer when handled this way.

MENU IDEAS - There are many greens in the box this week and next week. Some can be cooked, many are useful in raw salads. Two of the recipes in this newsletter do not feature many greens, but are complementary to cooking them. Save the sesame seeds from the Sesame Tofu recipe as you can use them to quickly dress up any steamed green. They are excellent with steamed spinach. The Scallion Ricotta Dumplings are good for a simple meal of dumplings, steamed asparagus and salad, or are wonderful in spring soups featuring asparagus, spinach and scallions.

I've added a few more recipes to the recipe archives on our website.

- [Penne, Spinach, Asparagus and Cashew Salad](#). You can prepare this versatile dish with scallions, asparagus, spinach and salad turnips. It is one of my favorite recipes.
- [Escarole Calzone Filling or Side Dish](#). We have received many positive comments from members on this recipe.
- [Mediterranean Summer Greens Sauce](#), from the Farmer John's Cookbook.
- [Escarole & White Bean Soup with Rustic Croutons](#), linked to the Fine Cooking website
- [Braised Chicken With Escarole And Sicilian Olives](#), linked to the New York Times website.

FARM and VEGGIE NOTES/ Tinkering with Spinach

We tried a new technique with spinach this spring. Farming dogma says that spinach must be seeded directly in the ground, that it cannot be transplanted. We've gotten pretty good at transplanting unusual crops over the years, so we decided to give it a try in hopes of having abundant amounts of spinach for the early CSA boxes. Steve and the crew grew plants in the greenhouse, and planted them outside when they were quite young. Wow, the experiment was a success, as you'll see with the lush spinach in your box this week. We expect to have another large bag of spinach next week too, maybe 1.5 to 2 lbs.

Asparagus - Some of this week's asparagus may need to have the ends trimmed, especially the longest stalks. Hold an asparagus spear in two hands and bend it. The stalk will snap at the spot where it turns from fibrous to tender. Discard the tough base or use it for soup stock. We snap all our asparagus at harvest, which usually eliminates the need for you to snap your asparagus at home. Some of the stalks got too long during the hot weather this week. Most of the asparagus we send this week will not need to be snapped.

White salad turnips (bunched white roots with green tops) - I know that returning members look forward to these sweet and delicious turnips, which taste nothing like the turnips that are harvested in fall.

Uses: Both the turnip roots and tops are edible. Slice the sweet roots and add to salads. They can be cooked and are especially good if lightly sauteed in butter. Stir as little as possible so they brown on at least one side. Treat the tops like any cooking green. They are easily combined with some of the other cooking greens we sent this week (spinach, escarole).

Storage: Refrigerate in a plastic bag.

FARM and VEGGIE NOTES , continued

Escarole (large green head that looks like lettuce) - This member of the chicory family can be eaten raw or cooked. Its slightly bitter flavor is a good addition to mixed salads. It is excellent cooked alone or mixed with other greens. It cooks quickly, but not as quickly as spinach. Refrigerate.

ESCAROLE and BEANS

Farm cook Eric Friedericks recommends this recipe. He prepared it for our work crew and it was delicious. Adapted from Allrecipes.com. Yield: 4 servings

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 large head escarole, cut or shredded into pieces
salt and pepper to taste
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 clove garlic, minced
one 16 ounce can cannellini beans, undrained
2 sprigs fresh parsley, chopped

1. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add escarole and toss, turning to coat with oil. Season with salt, pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes, or until tender.
2. In a separate skillet, heat remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Stir in garlic. Pour in beans with juices, and simmer until creamy, about 10 minutes. Stir in escarole and parsley; simmer 10 minutes more.

CRISPY SESAME TOFU

Adapted from Everyday Food Magazine, May 2003. Serves 4. Using a nonstick skillet to make this dish will help the tofu brown evenly with less oil. Use more oil if you are not using a nonstick skillet.

Beth's notes: This is a favorite recipe in our house. Our kids like it hot, or sliced and packed cold in their lunches. Save the toasted sesame seeds left in the pan after the tofu is cooked. They are useful to dress steamed spinach or other greens.

1 one-pound block firm tofu
1/4 cup sesame seeds
3 tablespoons toasted sesame oil, or more
3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce

1. Place block of tofu flat on cutting board; slice lengthwise into 4 equal pieces, then down the middle to make 8 pieces. Place on baking sheet lined with two layers of paper towels; cover with two more layers. Place another baking sheet and a weight on top. Let tofu drain until towels are soaked, 5 minutes.
2. Put the sesame seeds in a bowl. Press both sides of each tofu square into sesame seeds. In a large nonstick skillet, heat 2 Tbsp. sesame oil over medium heat. Cook tofu until tofu is golden brown and sesame seeds have toasted. Flip the tofu slices, add an additional 1 Tbsp. sesame oil, and cook until the sesame seeds on the second side are brown and toasted. Drizzle soy sauce over the tofu pieces and turn off the heat. Turn tofu pieces one time to distribute the soy sauce. Remove from pan.
3. Scrape the sesame seeds from the bottom of the pan and refrigerate. Save to use in the recipe below.

SPINACH OR OTHER GREENS DRESSED WITH TOASTED SESAME SEEDS.

Prepare your favorite green, whether spinach, mustards, kale, collards, etc. After cooking and draining the greens, season with the toasted sesame seeds reserved from the crispy sesame tofu recipe. Add minced onion or sliced scallions, black pepper, paprika and balsamic vinegar. Taste before adding any salt, as the toasted sesame seeds are salty from the soy sauce they were cooked in.

SCALLION RICOTTA DUMPLINGS

Beth's notes: These dumplings are rich and filling. They are delicious alone, or served in soup. They are fragile, so handle gently. Both our children love these dumplings, even the child that (usually) dislikes onions. Recipe adapted from one for [Ricotta Gnocci](#) (New York Times, 10/22/10). Yield: 4 servings, about 30 dumplings

Salt

One 15-ounce container ricotta cheese, preferably whole milk

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. black pepper

1 cup flour

1/4 cup thinly sliced scallions, packed

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Combine the ricotta, eggs, Parmesan, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Mix with a fork. Add the scallions and flour and mix well.
2. Drop the dough by rounded tablespoons into the boiling water. You will be able to cook half the dough at one time. Bring the water back to a boil and simmer gently, 10 minutes cooking time total. The dumplings will rise to the surface during cooking. Remove from the boiling water with a slotted spoon, set aside, and keep warm. Cook the second batch of dumplings. Serve immediately when all the dumplings are cooked.