

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER Week 11, Thursday August 29

IN THE BAG:

Herb bunches
Kohlrabi
Carrots
Broccoli
Lettuce Mix
Tomatoes
Cucumbers
Green beans
Ripe red pepper

On the side:

Watermelon
Sweet corn
Lisianthus flowers

Preserving the Harvest by Maddy Shaw

This season at the farm I've been trying to do more preserving. It's kind of a daunting task; we spend so much time growing the food that it can be hard to find time to preserve it! I know you all have busy lives, too, so I wanted to share some of what I know about preserving, because it's a great way to balance things out when the veggies in the bag are a little more than you can handle that week. Then you will have them in the winter when you are wishing you had more local produce!

Freezing is usually one of the quickest ways to preserve food. Buying freezer ziploc baggies is a worthwhile investment. I freeze things in pint- or quart-sized bags, because otherwise I have to thaw out a huge bag even if I only want a little bit.

Tomatoes (any kind) can be frozen whole or in chunks. When you defrost them in the winter the skins will slip right off, and then you can make sauce or add the tomatoes to a soup, stew or other dish (Spanish rice – yum!).

Summer squash is infamously abundant and lots of people get sick of it by the end of summer. You can grate it raw and freeze it in plastic baggies, which takes 10-15 minutes. Then in the winter you can sautee it or make zucchini bread. You can also sautee it with olive oil until it just starts to get tender, then spread it on plates to cool it off and bag and freeze it.

Kale, chard or other greens: most people devour them fresh, but if you can't think of a use for them try blanching them (submerge in boiling water for 2 minutes), cooling them off in a bowl of cold water, squeezing the water out, and then freezing them. Throw them into a soup or stir-fry in January – by then having some local greens in the freezer is a special treat!

Canning is a little more advanced, and I'm still learning a lot. I tend to mostly can things that are already high-acid (which has natural preserving properties) like tomatoes or already-fermented foods like sauerkraut and pickles. There is lots of great information online about canning, and I recommend reading about some of the basics (i.e. sterilizing jars, hot

About the vegetables:

The **herb bunches** are parsley and sage and thyme. The sage has the long, broad leaves and the thyme has tiny leaves. Some of you got curly parsley and some have flat leaf, Italian parsley. The sage and thyme are easy to dry, just hang them up in a little bunch somewhere. We sent more **kohlrabi** because we heard you all enjoyed these big monsters. These **green beans** are a favorite of mine. Take off the ends and wash. The easiest way to cook is to put in boiling water until just tender, about 5 minutes. This **sweet corn** in a new variety. See what you think.

Preserving (cont.)

Fermenting is the newest for me. Right now I have a trial batch of sauerkraut and pickles going. I think they can be stored in the basement if they are kept correctly (there is scum that forms and needs to be skimmed off), but I hope to can them so I can have them further into the winter. I have gotten good info from a book Kate has called Stocking Up. I've also hear that The Art of Fermentation is good.

Other proud preserving accomplishments this season: sun-dried cherry tomatoes and crab-apple rings in my solar dehydrator, freezing spinach, broccoli, sugar snap peas and sweet corn.

Carrot and Kohlrabi Coleslaw

From Maddy Shaw

2 cups grated carrots
3 cups grated kohlrabi
¼ cup mayonnaise
2-3 tablespoons cider or rice wine vinegar
½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
1 teaspoon caraway seed

Mix everything together and eat!

The Best Broccoli of Your Life | By [Adam Roberts](#) |

You know you've done something right with broccoli when the person you made it for describes it to someone else the next day as "better than biting into a steak." Those were Craig's words and they were a marked change from the first words he uttered about the broccoli, before he bit in: "You made broccoli for dinner? Broccoli and sweet potatoes?"

Then he did bite in and his eyes lit up. "Oh my God," he said. "This is the best broccoli I've ever had in my life." Later he said: "If parents made this broccoli for their kids, kids wouldn't hate broccoli. They'd beg for it."

So what did I do to the broccoli to make it taste so good? Normally, broccoli gets squishy when you cook it. Not this broccoli; it develops an amazing brown crust in spots. Then you toss it with lemon juice, lemon zest, and Parmesan cheese and you're in heaven. Seriously, this recipe is so easy I can recite it without looking at the book. (Ok, I'm lying; I'm about to open the book just to double check....)

You preheat the oven to 425.

Take 4 to 5 pounds of broccoli (I just got two large bunches), cut into florets (but relatively big ones.) Here's the key that she doesn't mention in the recipe: dry them THOROUGHLY. That is, if you wash them. I saw an episode of Julia Child cooking with Jacques Pepin once when Pepin revealed he doesn't wash a chicken before putting it in a hot oven: "The heat kills all the germs," he said in his French accent. "If bacteria could survive that oven, it deserves to kill me." By that logic, then, I didn't wash my broccoli; I wanted it to get crispy and brown. If you're nervous, though, just wash and dry it obsessively.

Now, it's easy. Put the broccoli on a cookie sheet. Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. (She says 5 Tbs olive oil, 1 1/2 tsps kosher salt, 1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper, but I just eyeballed it.) Now add 4 garlic cloves that are peeled and sliced and toss them in too.

Roast in the oven 20 to 25 minutes, until "crisp-tender and the tips of some of the florets are browned."

When it's done, take it out of the oven—and here's where it gets really good—zest a lemon over the broccoli, squeeze the lemon juice over the broccoli, add 1.5 Tbs more olive oil, 3 Tbs toasted pine nuts (I left those out), and 1/3 cup of freshly grated Parmesan cheese. She also has you add 2 Tbs julienned fresh basil, but I left that out too.

You won't miss it: the magic combo of the crispy broccoli, the garlic, the lemon and the cheese will make this the best broccoli of your life. I guarantee it; you will go ga-ga over it. I'm so ga-ga over it that I would seriously consider a trip right now to the store just so I could make this for lunch. Broccoli for lunch? After trying this, you'll never want to eat anything else for breakfast, lunch or dinner ever again.

Roasted Green Beans

"A great alternative to fast-food French fries, my family and friends love these as a snack or hors d'oeuvre. No matter how many I make, it's never enough!"

- 2 lbs green beans
- 1 -2 tablespoon olive oil (or just enough to lightly coat beans)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (or to taste, may substitute with Mrs. Dash if desired)
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper (or to taste, omit if using Mrs. Dash)

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Wash, dry well, and trim green beans.
3. Put green beans on a jelly roll pan.
4. Drizzle with olive oil.
5. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste (I like them salty so I use about 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt and about 8-10 grinds of the pepper mill). *Mrs. Dash may be substituted for salt and pepper as desired.
6. Use your hands to be sure all the beans are evenly coated and spread them out into 1 layer.
7. Roast for 20-25 minutes, turning after 15 minutes, until beans are fairly brown in spots and somewhat shriveled.
8. Serve hot or at room temperature.