

# North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Two

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

## IN THE BAG:

Lettuce mix with spinach

Kale

Small bunches of basil

Garlic scapes

Popcorn

Flowers – Hollandia variety of sweet Williams  
(We will deliver them twice)

## What happens when it is this wet?

The rain this year has been epic. We live in a thin layer of atmosphere that Goldilocks would love, not too hot and not too cold, not too wet and not too dry. A little out of the norm however and the systems that developed to live in a certain ecosystem get upset. Farming systems develop to match “normal”. When the ground is wet for long periods of time, the oxygen levels drop and the normal biological cycles that keep plants healthy stop. The nitrogen cycle is one of these. Organic agriculture depends on these natural processes to make nutrients available to the plants. In wet soils, very little nitrogen is available and the plants don't do well.

When the spring persisted wet and cold, out of desperation I planted things that had to get in the ground in an area that is sandier and warmer. This was a gamble because normally it would get too dry. At first, it was workable when the rest of the soil was cold and wet. Then it continued to rain and the water table rose in this area. There are standing puddles in that field now and we have only been able to get some chard and lettuce to grow there. All the rest of the crops, Chinese cabbage, green onions, spinach, sugar snap peas and broccoli were crop failures. The fact that anything survived there is a miracle. I quickly replanted in other areas but there will be a bit of a delay. Any crops that we can deliver this spring are a triumph.

## Interns

Each year I am blessed with young adults who want to learn about organic farming. This year I have two and first I want to introduce Magdalena.

“Happy week two of delicious and nutritious deliveries to you all! My name is Magdalena Kaluza. I am from the Phillips neighborhood in South Minneapolis. After working at Youth Farm for 4 seasons, I decided that I needed to up my farm skills. I couldn't have asked for a better teacher than Kate. She is caring, fun-loving, matter of fact, and experienced in EVERYTHING. I've wired a room, cared for calves, backed a trailer, built a coop, and learned which variety of tomato is prime BLT material. I got my bachelors in Urban Studies at Stanford University and am excited to combine that with all the technical and community knowledge I'm gaining on the farm. I hope to do food access work in Minneapolis. I love sharing spoken word, making jewelry, dancing, and riding my beloved bike. “

## About the vegetables:

**Lettuce mix** Part of this lettuce mix is a fancy-dancy variety that Johnny's select seeds developed and I am excited to try this year. It has more loft and texture than other mixes and is harvested as heads and then washed. We also added spinach and some other goodies.

I love sending **popcorn** because it tastes so good. Over a large bowl, break the cobs in half and grind the two pieces against each other to remove the kernels. I get asked if you can pop them off the cobs in a brown bag in the microwave. You can try it but I have never been successful. I heat about ¼ of oil in a large, heavy bottomed pot on medium high heat until 2 kernels pop. Add the rest of the corn and shake and swirl continuously. As soon as one pops, cover with a lid or metal colander. The colander lets the steam out so the popcorn is crispier. When the popping sounds are mostly done, dump the popcorn into a large bowl.

**Garlic Scapes** are the flower stalks that come out of hard-neck garlic. When they are young and tender you can use them just like garlic. Chop them up and add to your favorite recipes. You can blend them up with just enough olive oil to make a paste and freeze on wax paper in teaspoon fulls. Once they are frozen, put them in a plastic bag for use this winter.

## Garlic Harvest, Saturday, July 19

The garlic harvest is one of my favorite festivals because we have a specific taste to complete, digging and drying the garlic, and the food is so good. Start time is 10:30 with supper at 5:00. Bring snacks for lunchtime and something to add to supper. The menu for supper is French bread, cheese, roasted garlic, green salad, other salads, olives etc. The farm will provide the garlic and salad. If you have a sturdy potato fork, that is helpful although I am hoping to dig them up with a new tractor tool this year.



# Spaghetti with Braised Kale

## Ingredients

- 1 pound kale (about 2 bunches), large center ribs and stems removed, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch slices
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 1 tsp. red pepper flakes
- 8 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Finely grated Parmesan cheese

## Preparation

Rinse kale. Drain; transfer to bowl with some water still clinging.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add chopped onion and cook until soft and translucent, stirring occasionally, about 6 minutes. Add pepper flakes. Add sliced garlic and sprinkle with salt; cook until onion is golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Add kale and remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and toss until wilted, about 3 minutes. Cover pot and reduce heat to medium-low. Continue cooking until kale is very tender, stirring occasionally and adding water by teaspoonfuls if dry, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook spaghetti in medium pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain, reserving 1/4 cup cooking liquid. Add cooked spaghetti to kale mixture in pot. Add lemon juice and 2 tablespoons reserved cooking liquid; toss to combine, adding more liquid by tablespoonfuls if dry. Sprinkle spaghetti with grated Parmesan cheese and serve.

# Pan-fried Kale

## Ingredients

- 1 whole Large Bunch Of Kale, Or 2 Regular Bunches
- 2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 5 cloves Garlic, Finely Minced
- Salt And Pepper, to taste
- 1/2 Lemon and/or balsamic vinegar Optional

## Preparation Instructions

Thoroughly rinse the kale in cold water, soaking if necessary to remove grit. Tear the kale into chunks.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.

Throw in the kale and use tongs to move it around the skillet. Add the garlic and quickly stir it around to avoid burning. Sprinkle in salt and pepper and continue cooking until slightly wilted but still crisp, about 1 to 2 minutes.

Remove the kale to a plate and serve!

Option: Squeeze the juice of half a lemon over the top or splash on a little balsamic vinegar