

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Four Thursday, July 2, 2015



IN THE BAG:

Lettuce
Radishes
Green onions
Green beans
Sugar snap peas
Carrots
Arugula
Chinese cabbage

In defense of Beef – One farmer's Opinion

Recently I have heard a few stories on the radio about choosing not to eat meat, particularly beef as a way to be more sustainable and help “save the planet”. In a show I heard today, the moderator said that being vegan or vegetarian was a more moral choice. I wish things were that simple and that choosing to eat no beef would make a difference, but we need to think hard about our choices and be informed. For some people, being vegan or vegetarian is based on not wanting to take another life. I have no argument with that at all. But basing a decision because some meat is raised in factory farm situations is a narrow view. I would like to broaden the discussion. That is not the only way to raise meat.

Agriculture of any kind is hard on ecosystems. Nature really wants things to be in a terminal or final, stable condition. What that looks like depends on the climate. In some places it's a rain forest or in the Midwest, its prairie, oak savanna or northern mixed hardwood forests. It's not rows of vegetables. Most vegan diets depend on annual plants for protein sources. Almost all of these come from agriculture that tills and disturbs the soil. Grass-fed, local beef from cattle is a protein source that can come from a stable, sustainable system that converts grass into protein using a cow's amazing rumen and microbes. The soil is not turned, cultivated or damaged. I am not advocating that you eat beef necessarily, but dig deeper when being a vegetarian or vegan is held out as being morally superior.

Notes on the vegetables

Green beans: Fresh green beans are one of my favorites. I planted these in the hoop houses to get an early treat. These little gems are called Tavera and are the fresh fillet or haricot verts type. My favorite way to cook these is in a hot pan with a little olive oil. Toss them around for about 2 minutes, add about ¼ cup of water and cover tightly. Turn down the heat and cook until tender. Undercooked beans are “squeaky” and not as good as just past that point, about 5-8 minutes.

Sugar Snap Peas: After several years without these tasty treats, it is great to send such nice peas. Eat them raw or cook them lightly. If you include them in a stir-fry, add them last after you have turned off the heat and they will be just right. Over-cooked pea pods are a drag.

Chinese cabbage: My favorite thing to do with them is the famous potluck dish of ramen salad. I didn't include a recipe because there are so many online.

Carrots: What a treat to have early carrots and green beans. I planted these in the hoop house too in early May. Interplanted with them are the eggplants. We need to get the carrots out to allow room for the eggplants to grow. They are just a taste of things to come.

Arugula: This is the green that looks a little like spinach but has a strong musk smell. Mix it in with your lettuce for a great salad.

GOAT CHEESE AND ARUGULA PASTA SALAD

Ingredients

- 5 ½ oz. goat cheese
- 2 cups washed, coarsely chopped arugula, stems included
- 1 cup quartered cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- ¼ cup shaved Parmesan cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 8 oz. penne pasta

Method

1. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente
2. Sauté garlic in 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over medium heat until just turning color
3. Crumble goat cheese in a large serving bowl and add arugula, tomatoes, sautéed garlic, Parmesan cheese, olive oil and salt and pepper.
4. Drain pasta and add to goat cheese mixture. Toss and serve

Kim Chi

Pickling Ingredients:

- 2 pounds Napa Cabbage
- 1/3 cup coarse salt

Kimchi Seasoning:

- 1/2 teaspoon ginger, finely minced
- 1/2 cup red pepper powder
- 1 tablespoon organic sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons garlic juice
- 1/2 cup onion juice
- 4 scallions, cut into 1-inch lengths

Directions:

1. Cut cabbage up into 1-inch pieces. Place in a container. Dissolve salt in 1 cup of water and pour over cabbage. Use your hands to mix it in evenly. Cover and let cabbage pickle for 3 hours. Toss and turn over and pickle for 3 more hours. Strain the cabbage and discard the salt water.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine all the seasoning, except the scallions. Add the scallions and mix again. Let seasonings stand for 10 minutes. Distribute seasoning all over the cabbage, blending in with your hands.
3. Tightly pack cabbage in a jar. Cover the surface with plastic wrap and press down to get rid of air pockets.
4. Store at room temperature (around 70 degrees) for 24 hours to ferment. Chill before serving.