

THE TIPI TIMES

June 17, 2010, week 6 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Strawberries, 1 qt.
Rhubarb, 1 lb.
Snap peas, 1 lb.
Snow peas, about 0.5 lb.
Green leaf lettuce
Collard greens
Broccoli, 1 smallish head
Zucchini, about 2 lb.
Cilantro
Garlic scapes

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Peas, zucchini, basil and
more

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

A Final Strawberry U-Pick

Date: Saturday June 19

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We will host another u-pick this weekend. We have a modest amount of berries to offer this time. The picking will be slower than last week as the berries are smaller and more sparse. Flavor is excellent. Please note that the u-pick is on SATURDAY this time, and that the times have changed. You must read the 'member responsibilities' section in our June 10 newsletter before visiting the farm. This will be the final strawberry u-pick for this season. See my June 10 newsletter for directions to the farm. Check the weather report before leaving home and prepare accordingly.

Strawberries. Price remains \$2.00 per lb. We will offer u-pick until all the berries are picked, or until 1:00 p.m. Please bring containers to take your berries home. We will provide pails for picking. After weighing the berries you can transfer them to your containers.

Mulberries. There will be mulberries to pick for free.

CALL US IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR GET LOST, at 608-669-0557 (use only on the day of the farm event.)

Do not try to email us on the day of the u-pick, as we will not be checking our email. However, please check your email before leaving for the farm, in case there are any updates from us.

FARM NEWS. We enjoyed the farm party this weekend. About 150 members came to pick strawberries and mulberries and tour the farm. The picking was easy and everyone seemed happy with their berry haul. We enjoy the farm parties because it's a chance to meet some of the people we've been feeding and corresponding with for years. The members who toured the farm with Steve and I saw our fields at their most lush state. We showed off the crops that we are harvesting now, but most fields are filled with vegetables that we will harvest for CSA boxes much later in the season. We were lucky, lucky, lucky with the weather. Our event was scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It began raining at 2:05 p.m. Only a few members got drenched. Everyone else was already out of the fields.

Well, it's rained almost every day for weeks. Rainy weather is hard on vegetables and we can see the effect in some of our crops. An entire planting of spinach wilted and died over the last week, the result of rotten roots. We had planned to harvest that spinach for this box and next week's box. Oh well, some things do well and others do not. We are sending collards this week, and might have chard ready to pick next week.

The strawberries have fared better than expected. Usually they are the most sensitive to wet weather, but we've had a very productive year. The berries this week show some signs of the wet weather. There might be a few soft berries in your box that you need to discard.

VEGGIE NOTES. I must caution you again that the lettuce will need careful washing because of the recent rains.

Strawberries - These are the last time we'll have strawberries for the CSA boxes. Everyone will receive one quart, but it might be only partially filled.

Snap peas and snow peas - (***Snap peas are plump, snow peas are flat.***) - We've combined the two types of peas in one bag. These peas should be eaten pod and all. They are delicious raw, or very lightly cooked or stir-fried. They need a quick rinse to remove faded gray blossoms. Store in the refrigerator. Here's how to prepare the snow and snap peas. Snap off the stem end and pull the string down the concave side of the pod (the inward-curling side). Throw away the string and eat the pod.

Collard greens - This is the large bundle of flat leaves.

Zucchini - You will receive green or golden zucchini this week. Many squash will be oddly shaped but are fine to eat. This is typical for the first picking, and reflects that the first squash were not completely pollinated. Until last week, the plants were hidden under row covers where pollinators couldn't find them. The honeybees settled down to work once we removed the row covers and the newest squash look great.

Cilantro (bundle of fragrant green leaves) - This herb is good in salsa, chutneys and salad dressings, or added to stir-fries. Used in Mexican, Asian and Indian cooking.

Garlic scapes (curly green things) - We bought these from John Hendrickson of Stone Circle Farm who is growing organic garlic for our CSA again this year. The scapes grow at the top of garlic plants. John snaps them off to direct the plants' energy into forming garlic bulbs underground. Use scapes as a substitute for garlic cloves. They can be minced, mixed with olive oil, and added to stir fries or simple pasta dishes. The scapes can be sautéed, but will not brown like garlic cloves. Expect them to retain their crunch even when cooked, and to be milder than garlic cloves, closer in pungency to the green garlic we've sent.

Beef Stir-Fry, Smiling Cow Style

Melissa Clark, New York Times, May 14, 2010, Time: 30 minutes, Yield: 4 servings.

"In the past, my preferred method for finding the ideal dish of stir-fried beef and snow peas would be to order in from all the Chinese restaurants in my neighborhood, and sample my way to the best. But my appetite for Chinese takeout has plummeted with the more I've learned about feedlots and other unsavory cattle-raising practices. Which means if I want beef stir-fry made from happy, healthy cows, I have to make it myself. I've picked up some tips along the way.

The first is that nearly any lean cut of meat – flank steak, London broil, tenderloin, sirloin or skirt steak – will work if it is cut thinly enough against the grain. This is a good thing since there often isn't much choice in the grass-fed meat department of the supermarket, let alone those coolers at the farmers' market.

Another is that although historically my favorite restaurant beef stir-fry has always contained snow peas, sugar snaps are juicier and more succulent, but are just as crunchy. True to their name, they're also deeply sweet, complementing the savory elements – soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic and scallions – in the pan. Their downside is that they are slightly more work. To get the fat, crisp sugar snaps to cook as quickly as the beef, they need to be thinly sliced; skinny snow peas just need trimming. The upside is you get plenty of pea slivers strewn among the meat, which gives the dish a more integrated flavor.

As for the sauce, I keep it simple, leaning heavily on thick dark soy sauce (tamari works well), sesame oil, chicken broth and Madeira; that last ingredient replaces the more traditional Shaoxing cooking wine (or sherry) and sugar combo, to create a caramelized richness."

1 pound lean beef, cut into 1/4-inch strips
3 tablespoons tamari or dark soy sauce
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil, more for drizzling
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 pound sugar snap peas, trimmed
3 fat scallions
2/3 cup chicken broth

2 1/2 tablespoons Madeira or sweet sherry
1 tablespoon cornstarch
3 tablespoons peanut or olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
Rice, for serving
2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds (optional)
Sriracha or other hot sauce, or rice wine vinegar
and chili oil, for garnish.

1. In a medium bowl, mix beef, 2 tablespoons tamari, sesame oil, salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Thinly slice sugar snap peas crosswise into disks. Thinly slice scallions, reserving dark green parts for garnish.
3. In a small bowl, mix chicken broth, Madeira, 2 tablespoons water, remaining 1 tablespoon tamari and cornstarch.
4. Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add 2 tablespoons oil. When pan is hot, stir-fry beef until browned, about 2 minutes. Transfer beef and any liquid to a plate.
5. Add remaining tablespoon oil to skillet and when hot, add garlic and white and light green scallion parts until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Add sugar snap peas and chicken broth mixture, lower heat to medium and cover. Let cook for 2 minutes. Transfer beef and juices to skillet and stir-fry 2 minutes. Serve over rice, garnished with more sesame oil, sesame seeds, dark parts of scallions, and hot sauce or vinegar and chili oil.