

# THE TIPI TIMES

May 17, 2012, week 2 (purple EOW)

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## **THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:**

Spinach, about 1 lb  
Asparagus, 1.35 lb  
Red bibb lettuce  
Green garlic  
Boy choy  
White salad turnips  
Rhubarb, 1.5 lb.  
Cilantro

## **NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:\***

Spinach, asparagus, lettuce,  
scallions, white salad turnips,  
greens and more

**MENU IDEAS** Here are some of the things we ate this week, just to get your ideas flowing. Farm cook Bonnie Murphy made a few of these dishes for our crew lunch on Tuesday.

Stir-fried rice with bits of bok choy, turnips and green garlic

Cream of asparagus and spinach soup

Green garlic biscuits  
(use a cheese and chive biscuit recipe, but substitute thinly sliced green garlic. Ends up like garlic bread, but biscuits.)

Steamed asparagus with lime, salt and pepper

Lettuce salad topped with sliced white turnips.

Marinated turnip salad

Rhubarb pie

Rhubarb Cake

**How early was the spring?** I promised last week that I would write more about the unusually early spring. Many members have asked how it will affect the CSA boxes. Basically, it started our work much earlier than we are used to, and before our farmhand crew had returned to help us. Most of all, it introduced uncertainty into our planting schedules.

We like and plan for 'normal' weather. This spring was so abnormal that it was both exciting and alarming. Spring thaw is our benchmark; we cannot do much in the fields until the frost is out of the ground and the soil has a chance to dry. The ground thawed weeks earlier than usual, so we decided to advance the planting schedule of our spinach, radishes, turnips and other cool-season crops by one week. These plants are adapted to cold weather. They germinated and grew so quickly that harvests are two to three weeks ahead of schedule. This is unprecedented. The early plantings paid off, but with extra work. We tucked all the outdoor crops under row cover, lightweight cloth which protected them from many freezing nights and even a little hail.

We did not advance the planting schedules for frost-sensitive crops like tomatoes, melons and peppers. We start these in the protection of our warm greenhouses, but cannot risk transplanting them to the field any earlier than usual. We really mulled over these decisions. This season falls outside our 35+ years of farming experience.

It was unnerving to see the perennial crops wake up and grow ahead of schedule. The rhubarb reached full height a month earlier than expected. Would the lush growth survive frosts? We rarely protect rhubarb with row cover, but we covered it repeatedly this year. Row cover on, row cover off, row cover on, row cover off. My cooking tends to be inspired by the produce that I see or handle. I've already baked five rhubarb cakes because of spending so many evenings in the rhubarb field. We suspect that the strange weather has cost us some asparagus and strawberry yields but we can't tell quite yet. We'll learn more over the coming weeks.

So here we are, one week ahead of schedule with our CSA and two to three weeks early with our deliveries to Willy Street Coop and the Outpost stores. The weather has certainly led to a lovely box this week. *Beth*

## **New recipe service coming soon.**

Local chefs Pat and Laura of Local Thyme are planning a menu service to accompany our CSA deliveries but are not ready to debut it yet. 77Square gave them some great coverage last week, including an intriguing recipe for "Grilled Asparagus with Rhubarb Ramp (or green garlic) Sauce". [Read the article here](#). Pat and Laura expect to open enrollments for their service in the next few weeks. Watch this newsletter for an announcement.

## **Farm and Veggie Notes**

**Spinach** - This spinach was harvested from a different field than last week. This one was planted this spring. This is the 'salad quality' spinach that I wrote about last week. The leaves are thin and tender. You are welcome to cook it, just be aware that it will shrink substantially once it wilts. It will be delicious either way. Steve thinks this is the nicest crop of spinach we've grown in the ten seasons on this farm.

**Asparagus** - The asparagus grew well in the warmer weather, so we have a larger bundle for you this week.

**Red bibb lettuce** - This lettuce is incredibly tender. It will need to be washed.

**Bok choy (large rosette with thick white stems and green leaves)** - This Asian green is good for stir-frying or sautéing. It is also good in soups. You can think of the stems and leaves as two separate vegetables. The stems require longer cooking. The leaves will cook almost as quickly as spinach. Bok choy stores well, so feel free to pull off leaves as you need them, or use the whole head at once. Refrigerate in a plastic bag.

**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.

Storage: Cover and refrigerate.

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 sautéed 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).

Our favorite use: Slice very thinly and combine with a mixture of rice vinegar, mirin, soy sauce, sesame oil. Eat immediately or marinate.

## **Braised Bok Choy and Salad Turnips**

Contributed by Laura of Local Thyme who writes ...

I have been having fun with these beautiful white salad turnips in stir fries and curries for the past couple of weeks - but the combo of the turnips with the bok choy in this braise has been my favorite experiment. My kids picked every single white turnip off their plates to gobble up then began trying to snatch them off my plate - the operative word here is "trying" - I wasn't looking to share!  
Serves 4 as a main dish; 8 as a side.

2 tablespoons canola oil  
1/2 head bok choy (or use three baby bok choy)  
1 bunch white salad turnips with greens  
3 stalks green garlic, trimmed, white and light green parts thinly sliced  
1 tablespoon ginger, grated  
1/2 cup vegetable or chicken stock  
1 teaspoon rice vinegar  
1 teaspoon soy sauce  
2 tablespoons cilantro, washed and chopped.

Cut the bok choy lengthwise, and remove the core. Clean and dry the stalks. Cut the leafy part off the stalks. Chop the stalks and keep separate from leaves. Rough chop the leaves.

Thoroughly wash the turnips and their greens. Remove greens and rough chop and add these greens to the pile of leafy greens from the bok choy. Slice the turnip bulbs into 1/4" disks.

Heat wok over high heat until hot. Add oil and heat until shimmering. Add sliced bok choy stalks and sliced turnip bulbs and stir-fry, until lightly browned, 5-7 minutes. Add green garlic and ginger and cook, stirring about 30 seconds. Add bok choy greens and turnip greens, then pour in stock. Cover, reduce heat to medium, and cook about 6 minutes until greens are tender.

Remove cover, increase heat to medium-high and cook until liquid evaporates, 2-3 more minutes. Stir in vinegar and soy and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with cilantro on a bed of steamed rice. Inspired by a recipe from Cook's Illustrated.

## Warm Potato Salad with Asparagus and Green Garlic

This is another recipe from Laura of Local Thyme who writes ...

This is a great way to use up those potatoes from last week, if you still have any left. If using small potatoes (1-inch sized), keep them whole. Cut larger potatoes into 1-inch pieces.

2 cups small potatoes, or 1-inch diced potatoes, with skins

2 tablespoons olive or sunflower seed oil

2-4 green garlic stems, white and about 2 inches of pale green parts, roughly chopped

1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and ends peeled if you like, chopped into 1-inch lengths

1/3 cup chopped fresh herbs of your choice (parsley, tarragon, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, etc.)

Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400° F. Place potatoes in a roasting pan, and toss with 1 tablespoon of oil. Sprinkle with salt, and roast until tender—but not brown; about 15-20 minutes. (Pierce with a knife to test for tenderness.)

Move the potatoes to the side of the pan and add the asparagus and the chopped green garlic. Toss them in the pan and add 1 additional tablespoon of oil. Roast an additional 10 minutes, shaking the pan about half way through to make sure the vegetables are roasting evenly.

Remove the pan from the oven, transfer the vegetables to a bowl, and toss with the vinaigrette and fresh herbs. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm or at room temperature.

### Vinaigrette

Whisk together:

4 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar, or white wine vinegar

2 teaspoons whole grain mustard (or Dijon mustard)

Salt and pepper to taste