

THE TIPI TIMES

MAY 21, 2009, WEEK 1

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Asparagus, 1.1 lb.
Red leaf lettuce
Green leaf lettuce
Green garlic
Arugula
Button mushrooms, 12 oz
Rhubarb, 1.5 lb.

Madison members receive radishes this week; everyone else next week.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Asparagus
Lettuce
Green garlic
Spinach
Radishes
Rhubarb
and more

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

MENU IDEAS

- Steamed asparagus dressed with butter, lime juice, salt, pepper.
- Pasta tossed with butter, parmesan cheese, chopped cooked asparagus and olives.
- Quiche with asparagus, arugula, & mushrooms
- Big salads of mixed lettuce, arugula, radish and mushrooms
- Rhubarb cake
- Rhubarb crisp

WELCOME. Thank you for joining our farm this year. We are Beth Kazmar, Steve Pincus, children Sophie and Ari and a work crew of 23, many of whom have worked for us for several years. I'll tell you more about our farm over the coming months. It's been a cool spring, but we have lots of crops planted in the fields and growing steadily.

In deepest winter, a customer sent us a note with the following message: "Nearly every day I pull out fresh carrots from your farm to go into lunchboxes or on the dinner table. Your carrots have been our mainstay winter local vegetable for the past two winters. Thank you for growing enough to last until the spring greens come in. Put this love note in a file and pull it out when the growing gets tough. Best wishes for a wonderful season." What a lovely note. Remember the cold winter days when carrots were a rare local food? The days of spring greens are here. Our box this week is filled with the tender leaves and shoots and stems of spring: asparagus, arugula, green garlic, rhubarb. Think about how distinctive each tastes. Our wash station smelled wonderful as we washed these crops. I posted the note on our bulletin board for our work crew to read. It's a good reminder of how special spring crops are after winter, and a reminder of how much they will be appreciated. Enjoy.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ❖ The first three boxes of the season are always the lightest. Every-other-week (EOW) members, do not worry that you have signed up for the wrong share. Later deliveries will be bigger.
- ❖ We will send a printed copy of the newsletter in your CSA box this week and next week. After that we will send the newsletter by email only.
- ❖ Did you receive an email from us on Wednesday night? If you did not, please check your spam filters and junk folders and then contact us, preferably by sending an email to our address listed above. Double-check that you have added us to your email program's address book, and that (under 'preferences') you allow 'messages from senders in your address book to be exempt from junk mail filtering.' The exact language will differ for each email program. I am eager to be certain that our emails are reaching everyone.
- ❖ Returning members, do not be surprised if you also have trouble receiving my emails. Double-check the instructions above.
- ❖ EOW members, we assume that you read all the newsletters, even on weeks that you do not receive a box. We rely on the newsletter to communicate with everyone. You don't want to miss important information or a good recipe or a chance to purchase extra tomatoes.
- ❖ We will probably reschedule the strawberry u-pick days. The new tentative dates are Saturday June 13 and Sunday June 21. We will choose the final dates once we see how the strawberries mature. Watch the newsletter for an announcement.

VEGGIE NOTES. Asparagus - Enjoy this spring treat! You will receive either green asparagus, or a mix of green and purple asparagus. The purple variety will turn dark green when cooked, and the flavor is almost identical to normal green asparagus. The best way to wash asparagus is to submerge it in water, soak briefly, then swish vigorously and pull out of the water with the tips pointing down. The draining action helps pull the grit out of the asparagus tips. Repeat several times. Storage: Asparagus is perishable, so eat it as soon as possible. If you must store it

for a while, wrap the bundle in a paper towel and then store it loosely in a plastic bag. The asparagus tips tend to rot if in direct contact with the plastic bag. We snap our asparagus at harvest, rather than cutting it. Therefore, there is no need to snap the stalks to remove fibrous ends. For the same reason, it is not necessary to peel the asparagus stalks. It's OK to trim the end a bit. Cooking: Lay spears flat in the bottom of a broad pan, with ½ inch of water. Cover and steam over medium heat until just tender. Use two forks or a spatula to turn the asparagus during cooking, rotating the bottom spears in the water to the top. Drain and serve. Also excellent if dressed with vinaigrette and broiled or grilled.

Green garlic - (look like scallions) - Last fall, we planted lots of heads of garlic. The cloves sprouted and grew into the stalks we've sent today. If left to grow, the fat bulb on this week's garlic would divide and form the usual cluster of cloves in a garlic bulb. Green garlic is more pungent than scallions, so slice thinly and use sparingly when raw. It mellows nicely when cooked. The easiest way to use it is to chop it and add it to any cooked dish that would benefit from garlic. You may have to peel off and discard the outer layer. Use the white bulbs and pale green stems but not the leaves which are fibrous.

Lettuce - You will receive both green leaf and red leaf lettuces this week.

Arugula - (small bunch of green leaves with pungent scent) - This is good mixed with lettuce or spinach in salads or in cooked dishes. I really like it on sandwiches. Cover and refrigerate.

Rhubarb - Refrigerate in a plastic bag. FYI, 1.5 lb of rhubarb will yield about 5 cups when chopped.

Mushrooms - The certified organic button mushrooms are from Hidden Valley Mushrooms in the Wisconsin Dells. This year, we asked Mary and her crew to box up the mushrooms. We find that the mushrooms store much better when they do the handling.

RHUBARB SAUCE. This is the simplest way to prepare rhubarb. Chop rhubarb into one inch chunks. Stir over medium heat with a small amount of water in the bottom of the pan. The rhubarb will release moisture as it cooks. Stew until it softens and falls apart. Sweeten to taste with honey or sugar. Eat warm on its own, or over vanilla ice cream. We eat it on pancakes.

CLAIRE'S FRUIT PUDDING CAKE. From 'Let Them Eat Cake' by Susan G. Purdy.

"This recipe is a winner. It has a soft texture somewhere between a pudding and a cake. It is sweet, tender, filled with fruit, and quick and easy to prepare. Use whatever fruit is in season and serve it warm for breakfast or lunch." *Beth's notes: This makes a good everyday rhubarb cake. We've sent enough rhubarb to make a 9x13 inch cake if you increase the recipe by 50%. Also, it's fine to use one large egg instead of two egg whites in this recipe. The cookbook author chose egg whites to reduce the fat content.*

cooking spray oil

1 cup nonfat or low-fat sour cream or plain yogurt, top liquid poured off.

2 large egg whites (or substitute 1 extra large egg)

¾ cup sugar (use 1 cup if using rhubarb)

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour, or 1 cup all-purpose and ½ cup whole wheat flour

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

3 cups seasonal fruit of your choice - try 3 cups cut-up rhubarb OR 2 cups fresh blueberries plus 1 cup fresh or frozen nectarine or peach slices; OR 3 cups blueberries and/raspberries.

1. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly coat an 8 or 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray; set aside.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat or whisk together the sour cream (or yogurt), egg whites, sugar, vanilla.
3. On top of the wet ingredients, toss in the flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. Whisk to blend well. Stir in the fruit.
4. Turn the batter out into the prepared pan and bake 40 to 50 minutes, until golden brown on top. A cake tester should come out clean or with just a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Cool the cake in the pan on a wire rack about 10 minutes, then cut it into squares and serve warm from the pan.