

# ONE POTATO TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF DRIFTLESS ORGANICS  
VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4 JUNE 28-30, 2012

*Hello! We are into week #4 of the season. Farmers like us sure do like to talk about the weather and I am afraid, like that awful relative that you feel obligated to call during the holiday season, I am going to bore you all with some weather talk. You see, it has been such a crazy year so far and it really has affected what has been and will be in your CSA boxes. So much so that I felt compelled to give you all a rundown of what we've been dealing with so far this year.*

We came into this 2012 season off of a very warm and dry winter. This was great for our wood piles and heating bills; but for us hibernators and ski lovers, it was a major bummer. The absence of snow cover meant that the precious soil in our vegetable fields was subject to the wind and other elements that can easily deplete soil health. The lack of snow also meant that we didn't go into the spring with that ever so important deep moisture in the ground that we so need. Under normal conditions, as the snow melts from the fields in March and April, we are left with great puddles in our fields. As the ground thaws this moisture slowly seeps into the soil, providing the moisture needed to get those early plantings started.

The fields thawed out in about half the time as normal and we didn't see those puddles. What we saw was highs in the 80s and many nights without freezing. This was great and super exciting for the tractor-heads among us. After all, it meant that we were able to get into our fields earlier than ever before to till and prepare the ground for the major planting sessions that were about to ensue in mid-April.

Veggie farms all around us were going berserk with this early warm weather by "getting a jump" on their first round of seedlings (crops like peas, carrots, beets, parsnips, etc). As tempted as we were to follow this trend, we held back (for the most part), knowing that there was still some very real dangers of frost for the next couple of months. The last thing we wanted to do was use up some very expensive organic seed only to see all of the little seedlings freeze to death. So, despite the overwhelming temptations, we held back on most crops. (We did however plant in early planting of carrots that are in this week's box!) Another highlight worth mentioning is that we managed an unprecedented late March crew-canoe trip on a sunny 82 degree day.

Our warm March transitioned into a very cool and wet April. Right as we started to do our major transplantings of onions, broccoli, cauliflower, etc it got so cold and miserable that we started to worry, "if we plant these little seedlings today, are they going to survive?" And then it continued to rain, and rain, and rain. We rejoiced with this moisture, hoping that it would replenish our dwindling reserves.

All the while we silently muttered curses at the consistency of the rain. You see, we needed a few dry days in a row to be able to continue our rigorous planting schedule, lest we fall behind (falling behind in the spring usually spells doom, as it is near impossible to catch up...). It is pretty crucial for us to do some hefty plantings of crops like spinach, radishes and the like at JUST the right time so that they are ready for that first CSA box and the wet fields prevented us from being out there right when we wanted to be.

Well, I think we may have cursed a little too loudly, because somebody heard us and stopped all rain altogether. So all of a sudden, when we needed the rain the most (when the plants are small, vulnerable and in need of relatively constant moisture), the sky cleared up and stayed clear for about 45 days.

This has probably done the most damage for us and as much as we try to keep up on watering, we just can't seem to keep everything alive and thriving.

Another huge detriment has been the insects! We knew they were going to be bad, due to the fact that we didn't have the kind of cold winter it takes to kill off some of the pests that plague us. But we had no idea they would be this bad! With the plants being stressed from lack of moisture they were all the more susceptible to being eaten by bugs (pests love to prey on stressed out plants). We are seeing insects

## **THIS WEEK'S BOX**

**Arugula  
Fresh Garlic  
Garlic Scapes  
Green Top Carrots  
Green Zucchini or Yellow  
Summer Squash  
Joi Choi  
Kohlrabi  
Radishes  
Rainbow Chard  
Salad Turnips  
Snap or Snow Peas  
Sorrel**



*Harvesting your chard with Joey, Rachel, Thomas & Sarah*

like the cabbage loppers or the flea beetles in numbers that we have never seen before.

Well, I don't mean to paint a picture of all gloom and doom. Despite it all, we have been mighty lucky to not be getting the kind of rain and flooding that our northern neighbors are receiving or that our farm has sustained in the past. We'd rather have it dry and have to irrigate than too wet and flooding (which you can't really do anything about). All in all, it has been a pretty nice spring and early summer. We just wish it would rain some...

*Take care everyone and stay cool!*

*--Mike*

**Arugula** – it comes in a bunch this week. If you are getting sick of arugula - try making your whole bunch into a arugula pesto and freeze it for later.

**Basil Plant** – for the Every Other Week members only this week. Basil is relatively easy to grow and your plant should last for a couple of months in its pot. Harvest by plucking off leaves at the node to encourage branching. You can either keep it in its pot on a window sill or plant it in your garden!

**Fresh Garlic** – Some really nice looking garlic here! Fresh garlic is a little milder than the cured stuff that we are used to and should be stored in the fridge. Otherwise use it like you would regular garlic.

**Green Top Carrots** - the greens aren't necessarily edible, so unless you've got a pet rabbit or turtle, go ahead and remove them and toss 'em in your compost pile. The carrots will store better w/o the tops. Try grated carrots combined with arugula - their sweetness is the perfect foil for arugula's peppery spiciness.

**Garlic Scapes** - the flowering stem of the garlic plant, scapes have garlic flavor & lots of crunch. Trim the tip off right above the white bulbous flower bud & finely chop the bud & the entire stem & use anywhere you would normally use garlic, fresh or cooked. A mini food processor comes in real handy if you cut they pieces into 1" or 2" lengths first. They keep just as well in a vase of water on the kitchen table as in plastic in the fridge (just change the water frequently). CSA member

Luanne suggests grilling the scapes... sounds delicious to me!

**Green Zucchini or Yellow Summer Squash** - Just a teaser this week, but don't you worry there will be much more to come. Both are great in stir fries or grilled and drizzled with olive oil for a wonderful side dish. Store uncovered in your crisper drawer for 5-7 days.

**Green and/or Purple Kohlrabi** - You will be receiving either a green or purple kohlrabi. The bulb can be eaten raw, either sliced or grated, by itself or in salad or coleslaw. For a simple side dish, sauté briefly with olive oil and garlic and serve with fresh lemon juice, salt, & pepper. The greens can be eaten as well and should be treated like kale or collard greens.

**Joi Choi** – big beautiful Bok Choi (Joi Choi is simply a variety of the popular Bok Choi)! One of my favorite stir-fry vegetables because it's like 2 for 1 – the stem is super sweet & juicy & crunchy (cook it first) & the greens are tender & just a little bit spicy (add them last). Great in Asian soups & curries, too. Check out the stir-fry recipe, below.

**Radishes** - try the versatile scallion-radish relish recipe from last week. Radishes make for a great relish dish appetizer before a meal with friends, or sliced up on salads. Most likely the last of the radishes for a while, so radish non-lovers rejoice!

**Rainbow Chard** – these beautiful gems are full of nutrients & flavor! I like to cook the greens & stems as separate vegetables,

personally, or at least saute the stems for a few minutes before adding the greens so they're not too crunchy. I also like these with butter. If you're not so crazy about the flavor all by themselves, try adding them at the end of soups or sauces instead.

**Salad Turnips** – Look for the bunches with the white roots that look like radishes. You CAN eat these greens and highly recommend trying them as a sautéed green. The turnips themselves are great grated up in salads, or cut into rounds to use in place of crackers. Remove the tops from the turnips and put them each in their own separate plastic bag.

**Scallions** – otherwise known as green onions, are what we use to replace onions until onions are ready. Use both white & green parts & store in plastic in fridge for several days.

**Sorrel** - look for the small bunch of oval shaped leaves. This intense lemon-flavored leafy herb is great chopped up in salads or added at the last minute to stir-fries or soups where you want a bit of lemony flavor. Goes well with chicken. Store in plastic in the fridge & use up within a few days.

**Snap & Snow Peas** - we are nearing the end of a very short lived season of peas. They simply just do not like this heat, and have pretty much stopped growing. I hope you enjoyed them while they lasted. Personally, I like to eat these peas - both snap AND snow, raw with some sort of dip (like hummus). Makes for a great mid-afternoon snack.

### Grilled Zucchini Pasta Salad with Peas, Goat Cheese, & Pesto Vinaigrette

- 1 large or 2 small zucchini/summer squash
- 1 cup snap or snow peas
- 8 oz. pasta corkscrews, shells, or penne
- 3 Tbsp. pesto (garlic scape & arugula pesto would be great)
- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- ¼ c. olive or Driftless sunflower oil
- ½ bunch of scallions, chopped (white & green parts)
- 2 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled
- Salt & pepper to taste

Carefully slice zucchini lengthwise into thin slabs ¼" thick. Brush with oil & sprinkle with salt & pepper & grill until just soft & grill-marked (this can be done up to 2 days ahead, anytime you have the grill going!). Let cool, then cut into large pieces (refrigerate if doing ahead of time). Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil & blanch the peas for no more than 30 seconds. Immediately remove with a slotted spoon or strainer & run under cold water. Boil pasta in the same water until just soft & drain. Rinse with cold water & let drain. In a large serving bowl, whisk the pesto, vinegar, & oil. Fold in grilled zucchini, peas, pasta, & scallions. Add salt & pepper to taste. Garnish with goat cheese & serve room temperature.

### Rainbow Chard with Dried Currants & Nuts

- 1 bunch rainbow chard, rinsed, stems separated
- 2 tbsp. butter or oil
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic scapes (tip above flower discarded)
- 3 tbsp. white wine
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 tbsp. dried currants
- 2 tbsp. toasted pine nuts or chopped walnuts

Slice chard stems into 1/4-inch pieces. Coarsely chop wet leaves and set aside. In an 8-inch skillet, heat butter or oil over medium-high heat. When hot, add chard stems and sauté for a couple minutes. Add garlic scapes, stir a few times, then add wine, damp chard leaves, salt and pepper. Stir about 2 minutes until all the chard leaves are wilted. Add currants, stir and cook for another couple minutes, until liquid is evaporated. Top with nuts and serve immediately. Serves 3-4 as a side dish.