



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF  
 DRIFTLESS ORGANICS  
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*Week #15! With the cool nights and the change in the sun's light, autumn is most certainly in the air. Every year about this time, I somewhat jokingly bash and slander this upcoming season because after all, the fall and the killing frosts that come with it do in fact undermine our very purpose here on the farm: to grow things. I do realize that the autumn is as necessary and wonderful a season as any and with that realization, I embrace it.*

*With the change of seasons, the tempo on the farm takes on a slightly heightened sense of urgency. In the back of our minds, we are counting the days left to accomplish the mountain of tasks that lie ahead. There's a lot out there left to harvest, there's fields to seed down with cover crops, there's garlic to plant and there's a greenhouse to put up! We're excited about it all, our backs our strong, and we have most certainly caught our second (or is it third?) wind that will propel us into and through this beautiful season called autumn.*

## Vegetables are Like People!

**A**m I running out of things to write about? Sort of, but hear me out on this one. Plants and people have a lot in common! Here are some thoughts from the tractor seat about how I think we relate to those things that we grow and eat:

### Don't perform as well under stress.

OK, so some people could argue with me on this one (causing undue stress), but I personally don't do as well when

I am stressed out. Plants are the same: when a broccoli plant is stressed out by lack of water or nutrients, or by being too hot (like this season), it will produce a pretty pathetic and oftentimes nasty tasting head of broccoli. A stressed out vegetable plant will not grow as tall or vigorous, it will be prone to disease and if it does produce fruit, that fruit will be smaller and of less quality.

With a quiet mind and a clear heart, I can accomplish just about anything I put my mind to; and I can grow to be the healthy person I strive to be. If I am tired, overworked, stressed out: I get sick. Simple as that.

### Need Nurturing to Grow.

This is along the same lines as the above one. Like plants, we need love and nurturing to become good people. We treat our vegetable plants, especially the young seedlings in the spring, with love and care and respect. We carefully plant them in the ground and feed and water them; and keep the competing weeds away from them. In this way, they are given the room, the food and the encouragement needed to grow strong and produce a nutrient dense and great tasting vegetable. I owe so much of my success and position in life to the nurturing care of my parents and teachers. I was given everything I could have asked for to become the person I chose to become.



Now, I continue to grow thanks in part to the love of my wife, my parents and my friends.

### An amazing amount of diversity!

From asparagus to zucchini, there are so many vegetables out there! Of all varying shapes,

## this week's box!

- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Bunched Arugula
- Delicata Squash
- Garlic
- Green Top Red Beets
- Mixed Tomatoes
- Pea Tendrils
- Pickling or Regular Cucumbers
- Red or Yellow Italian
- Frying Peppers
- Sage
- Shallots
- Sweet Mini Peppers

sizes and colors, the diversity is almost spellbinding. Some grow above ground, others below. Some vegetables produce a fruit that we eat, some we eat the roots or leaves from. And you know what, there's not one better or worse than another. Just like people!

### Bending, not breaking.

In the greenhouse, we have fans blowing on our seedlings and one reason for this is to give them a taste of the wind that they will soon experience once planted outside. They blow around in their little pots and quickly develop a stronger, more flexible stem that can hopefully withstand the gusts of wind that are so prevalent on the ridge. The more flexible we can be as people and the better we are at bending to the challenges we are faced with, the more likely we are to succeed. Someone who is irrationally rigid and unwillingly to compromise will inevitably fail.

### Come from the Earth, return to the Earth.

No matter how awesome I may think I may be, I'll someday soon be the dirt that something else will grow out of. And that's pretty awesome too when you stop and think about it.

--Mike

**Bunched Arugula** - unless you really love spicy arugula, you might want to cook this more mature arugula instead of eating it raw – just barely wilt it in eggs, stir-fries, sauces, or soups. It doesn't keep long, so use it up within a couple days. Make sure to wash it well!

**Broccoli** - eat raw or blanch, steam, stir-fry, or roast. Store in plastic in fridge & use within a few days.

**Delicata Squash** - the first squash of the season! Delicatas have thin enough skin to eat if you wish, making it a nice squash to cut up & add to mixed roasted vegetables, stir-fries, curries, etc. unpeeled.

**Garlic** - some of our porcelain type garlic. Store with your onions.

**Green Top Red Beets** - add the greens to the arugula & pea vine for some nice wilted greens. Grate the roots raw for salad, roast or boil them whole, or cut them into half-moons or wedges, toss with oil/salt/pepper & roast until slightly caramelized (yummy to stir in some chopped garlic & rosemary, sage, or thyme in the last 5 minutes of roasting). Store in plastic in the fridge & use up greens within a couple days.

**Pea Tendrils** - adds a nice sweet crunch to salads or stir-fries. Or simmer it in Asian-style soups. Just make sure to chop it up, as the stem can be rather fibrous.

**Pickling or Regular Cucumbers** - The picklers look (sort of) of like a cucumber, only squatter and white, yellow and green. Treat them like you would a regular cucumber - but you may want to peel them as the skins are a little tougher.

**Red or Yellow Italian Frying Peppers** - the best peppers for roasting (roast them whole over direct flame – on a grill, under a broiler, or on a gas burner – until blistered & charred, put in a bowl with a lid or plastic wrap for 10 minutes to steam, then remove skin in a bowl of water or in the sink. Remove stems & seeds & slice. Add to recipes that call for roasted red peppers. Or just use them as you would a red bell – raw, sautéed, stir-fried, or simmered in soups or sauces. Store on the counter for a day or two or in the fridge for longer.

**Mixed Tomatoes** - There will be an assortment of red slicers, romas and a few heirloom varieties as well. All tomatoes should be stored upside down on your counter and NOT in your refrigerator. Some may be a

touch on the unripe so. Simply let them sit out for a day or so until they are soft to the touch. For a better explanation of varieties, check out our recipe page on the website.

**Sage** - a nice herb to pair with beets, squash, or tomatoes. Nice with pasta & caramelized onions. Store in plastic in the fridge for a few days, or you can hang it upside down & dry it in a dark place with good ventilation. When totally dry, remove leaves from stem & crumble them with your hands, then store in an airtight container.

**Shallots** - not just an annoyingly small onion, shallots really are special! They have an intense yet refined flavor somewhere between a sweet onion, garlic, & wild leeks. Extensively used in French & Asian cuisine. When Mike & I were in Vietnam last winter, they had several different varieties that were exclusively reserved for specific different dishes. Store as you would onions, on the counter for a couple weeks or in a dark, cool place for longer storage.

**Sungold Tomatoes** - If you just can't eat another sungold, try tossing them with a bit of oil, salt, & pepper & roasting them at 400 degrees, stirring occasionally, until starting to caramelize & collapse. Let it cool, pack into a jar, & freeze to pull out in the winter & smear on crackers with cream or goat cheese, make bruschetta, top pizzas with, or toss in pasta.

## Broccoli & Roasted Pepper Salad with Tomato Vinaigrette

*Altered from Deborah Madison's Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

### Dressing:

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. balsamic vinegar
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 4-6 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 Roma tomatoes or ½ cup cherry tomatoes, neatly diced

### Salad:

- 3 red bullhorn peppers, roasted, peeled, de-stemmed & seeded, & cut into 1/2" squares
- 1 ½ lb. broccoli with stems
- 1 Tbsp. parsley or sage, chopped
- ½ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- Salt & pepper to taste

• For the dressing: In a small bowl, combine the garlic, shallot, vinegars, salt, & pepper. Let stand 15 minutes, then whisk in the oil & add the tomatoes. Taste & adjust seasonings if needed. Set aside (you probably won't use it all in the salad – save excess for a green salad!).

• Separate the broccoli into small florets. Peel & dice the stems. Blanch the florets & stems in boiling salted water until just tender (about 2-3 minutes) & drain in a colander. In a large bowl, combine roasted peppers, broccoli, herbs, feta & a bit of the dressing. Taste & add more dressing, salt, & pepper as needed. Serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 4-6.

## Creamy Fresh Tomato Soup

- 5-6 large tomatoes, chopped
- 2 shallots, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. butter or olive oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Basil, sage, or parsley, cut into chiffonade
- 4 Tbsp. heavy cream or crème fraiche

• Heat butter/oil in a heavy bottomed pan over medium/high heat. Add shallots & sauté until translucent, about 3-4 minutes. Add garlic & stir for a minute or two. Add tomatoes, stir, & cover. Lower heat to maintain a simmer. Stir occasionally, adding a splash of water or red wine if tomatoes start to stick. Cook about an hour. At this point you can run the soup through a food mill if you want a perfectly smooth soup, or if you don't mind a more rustic soup (i.e. with some peel & seed) just puree it with an immersion blender, leaving it a bit chunky if you like. Return to heat & add salt, pepper, herb(s) to taste, & cream & serve. Serves 3-4.