

Welcome and welcome back!

This is the first newsletter for the 2016 season. And for all of you who are new to Plant It Forward's farm share – welcome to the family. We send a newsletter every week (or so . . .) with information about the Farms, Farmers, the Program, or whatever is on my mind that day. *Best of all, I'll talk about the produce and how to use it.*

I usually have 2-3 recipes each week from a variety of sources, so if you have a good source or a recipe to share, please send it back to me. And I also do my best to collect what the abundant vegetables will be that week. Since each farmer is slightly different, not everyone will get the same products, but based on the season there are common things being harvested and I'll let you know what they are.



Farmer Roy at UST Farm



Farmer Alimassi at WCG Farm

Another feature of the newsletter is the veggie ID section. This is where I'll put some pictures and a description of the vegetables in your share. And this is my favorite part of the Plant It Forward Farm share – going on the adventure to new products. Since I've been with the program I've eaten kohlrabi, sunchokes, mizuna, roselle, Malabar spinach, 3 different kinds of radishes, lovely turnips and lemony sorrel – none of which I'd ever had before.

So if you are ready to go on this adventure with us, Welcome!!

Cathy and everyone at Plant It Forward

“What are all these different greens??!!” Here is a brief guide to the different greens that have been in the shares lately. My go-to site for produce descriptions is a California Produce Wholesaler called [Specialty Produce](#). I don’t know who keeps up this encyclopedia of information, but I love browsing there. I’ve listed 11 greens that you might be seeing in your share or at the market. I left out all the lettuces and mesclun mix, so if you don’t see your greens on this list, that might be what it is. If you still can’t identify it, send me a picture and your pick up location and I’ll check with the farmer.



Mizuna is has long, broad, serrated and deeply cut satin finished leaves with thin trailing stems that meet at its root base. Mizuna's flavors can be characterized as piquant and bright with a subtle earthiness.



Mustard greens have broad, wavy frilled leaves with longitudinal veins. Upright leaves are supported by thin pale green stems. Mustard greens have a distinct, succulent, crunchy and yet tender texture. Their flavor is robust with bold peppery nuances.



Arugula consists of vibrant green leaves attached to a pale creamy green hue stem. The leaves are lobed and can be harvested when young and mild in flavor or when fully mature at 3 or 4 inches in length. Arugula offers an herbaceous, peppery flavor with nuances of nuts and mustard. Leaves allowed to mature too long on the arugula plant will become bitter in taste. The pungent flavor of arugula is due to its high content of sulfur containing compounds known as glucosinolates.



Sylvetta arugula is also commonly known as "Wild" arugula or rocket. This wild type of arugula grows about half the size of non-wild arugula and has deeply lobed leaves. Classified as a perennial, Sylvetta arugula is cold hardy and has a tender texture. Sylvetta arugula offers a more pungent peppery flavor than other arugula varieties.



Greens Swiss chard has broad wavy and crinkled green leaves with snow white stalks and veins flowing throughout the foliage. Those veins act as nutritional dispersers to the rest of the plant, as the food production occurs in the leaves. The leaves are succulent and tender, their flavor far more mellow than other varieties, which is why Green Swiss chard has been nicknamed "Butter chard". The white stalks are equally more edible and favorable to the palate, lacking the bitterness common with colored varieties



Rainbow Swiss chard is distinguished by its bouquet of wrinkled, slightly savoyed rich green and bronze leaves and bright colored stems. The leaves grow upright and tall from a dense rosette of ribbed stems in a myriad of colors including gold, pink, orange, purple, red, and white with bright and pastel variations. Rainbow Swiss chard is not unique from other chards in its subtle earthy flavors along with slight notes of tang, due to its betalain pigment content. The leaves are succulent and tender when young, the stems, fibrous and sometimes bitter and inedible



Collard greens are a headless forming cabbage, similar to kale. Their leaves are broad, paddle-shaped and grey green to deep green in color with contrasting succulent white ribs and veins. Their flavor is assertive, almost alkaline and true to its family, cruciferous in nature. Collard greens should be chewy in texture, a sign of good water content and freshness. Late winter and early spring provide the sweetest and most tender Collard greens.



Flavorful Tuscan Kale, also called cavolo nero (meaning black cabbage in Italian), produces rich, grayish-green to deep green leaves that are characteristically crinkly. Tuscan kale is chewier than Swiss chard, sweeter in taste than collard greens and milder in flavor than peppery mustard greens.



Lecano kale, also known as Toscano kale has deep dark green leaves that are super-savoyed, long and narrow with a striking blue-grey color. It is one of the most robust and vigorous growers in the kale family. - See more at: http://www.specialtyproduce.com/produce/Lecano_Kale_5130.php#sthash.8Hs0yiZn.dpuf



Red Russian kale grows in a large loose rosette shape that ranges from .3-.5 meters tall. This variety is easily recognized by its richly colored burgundy stems and purple tinted leaves. They are flat and toothed like an oak leaf with an overall dark green color and deep red veins. Red Russian kale offers a mild nutty flavor that is slightly sweet and earthy with a hearty texture. When choosing Red Russian kale look for fresh, bright, firm leaves.



French sorrel is the benchmark sorrel variety and an indispensable green in French cooking. Its long broad kelly green leaves are earthy and succulent with lemon undertones and a sharp mineral finish which may be due to its high oxalic acid content.

The first recipe is from a Farm Share Member, Carolyn, who is writing a weekly blog with recipes that she is making from the Plant-It-Forward shares. I am so happy that someone is having so much fun cooking and that she loves to share it. So thanks Carolyn, for this butternut curry recipe and all the other wonderful pictures and recipes on your site.

<http://wiesscooks.blogs.rice.edu/>

Abundant Vegetables this week: Kale, Radishes, Carrots, Lettuce Mix, Sorrel

RECIPES

Butternut Curry

From <http://wiesscooks.blogs.rice.edu/>

- A [Taste of Thai Yellow Curry paste](#) (can substitute other [brands](#))
- 1 can coconut milk 2 baked sweet potatoes or yams (can substitute any potatoe)
- 2 cups [turnips](#), boiled and then cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1-2 cups frozen green peas
- 2-4 cups cooked rice
- Optional: 1 medium onion, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Optional: 1-2 teaspoons fish sauce, to taste
- Optional: 1/2 lb. to 1 lb. chicken tenders or boneless chicken breast, grilled and cut into bite-sized pieces

Prepare the curry sauce by combining 1 Tablespoon of the yellow curry paste with the coconut milk in a saucepan. The envelope will contain enough paste for about 3 batches of curry. Store the remaining paste in a Ziploc bag in the refrigerator. Bring the curry sauce to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer on low for 10 minutes. Stir to prevent the sauce from sticking to the bottom of the pot.

Bake your potatoes ahead of time (follow the [recipe for baked Russet potatoes](#)). You can bake them up to 1 week in advance. Store them in the refrigerator and the skins will wrinkle up and are very easy to remove. If you are including [turnips](#), cook them ahead and cut them the same size as your potatoes.

If using the onion, fry until brown in a large, non-stick skillet sprayed with Pam. Add the curry-milk base to the pan and turn heat to simmer. Add cooked vegetables (yams, butternut squash, potatoes, turnips). If you are using chicken, add it in now. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and if you like the flavor of fish sauce, add it now. Simmer over medium low heat (4-5 on a scale of 0-10) for 7 minutes. Add the frozen peas and serve over rice.

Creamy Sorrel Soup

From: <http://food52.com/recipes/19001-creamy-sorrel-soup>

Serves 4

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup yellow onion, small dice
- 1/4 cup carrots, peeled and diced small
- 1/4 cup celery, washed, trimmed and small dice
- 2 cups starchy potatoes, small dice
- 1/3 cup basmati rice
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup cream
- 2 1/2 cups sorrel, washed, spun dry and chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, minced
- kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

1. Place a 3 quart enameled Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the butter and as it melts add the onions, carrots and celery. Season them with a two finger pinch of salt and a few grinds of fresh pepper.
2. Let the vegetables sweat until tender then add the potatoes, rice and vegetable stock. Bring the soup to a boil then reduce the heat to a simmer.
3. Cook until the rice and potatoes are tender. Anywhere between 20 and 30 minutes. Once they are tender add the cream, sorrel and fresh thyme. Heat the soup through and until the sorrel is wilted. Taste and adjust the seasoning.
4. Serve

