



Greetings from Plant It Forward!

Welcome to the first week of the Fall/Winter/Spring 2013-2014 Farm Share season. It seems appropriate during this first week to share a note about the origins of Plant It Forward from our executive director, Teresa O'Donnell.

Plant It Forward (PIF) was started in 2010 as a social entrepreneurial venture by the principals of Bridgeway Software. We were searching for a way to give back to our community when several divergent ideas came together like the pieces of a puzzle, forming the idea for PIF. First an article in the Houston Chronicle about assimilation difficulties of local refugees caught our attention. Next came a PBS special about the actress Tippi Hedron who befriended Vietnamese refugees in the 70's who were living in a refugee encampment outside Sacramento. When the immigrants admired her manicured nails, she employed her manicurist to teach them the skills of the trade. This simple act spawned the nail salon business that is now ubiquitous across the nation. We wondered what could be the equivalent of the nail salon business for this new set of refugees. Another article in the Chronicle provided the final piece, the idea that market gardening in Houston could generate a living wage. A check on the job skills of unemployed and underemployed local refugees confirmed that they were farmers in their home countries.

Since October 2012, during the first growing season on the Fondren farm, PIF has sold produce at the Urban Harvest farmers market every Saturday, to some of the best chefs in Houston and as Farm Share subscriptions. PIF has created 3.5 acres of urban farmland and graduated 10 refugees from the 12 month training program where they were taught organic growing methods, sales, marketing and business skills. Five graduates are currently farming full-time while PIF actively seeks land for the other 5 graduates. Fourteen new farmers are enrolled in the second training and attending classes every Saturday. These talented farmers are refugees from the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda.

Your enrollment in the PIF Farm Share is a vital contribution to the success of these farmers. These men and women who once had difficulty finding work and a sense of worth are now finding respect and hope. Please feel good about your contribution as you nourish your body with the freshest local produce.

We hope you enjoy your first week of the Farm Share. We look forward to sharing our harvest with you, and are always open to your ideas for improvement.

Kassy Rodriguez, Community Supported Agriculture Manager

Enjoy!

Teresa O'Donnell, Executive Director

Colleen O'Donnell, Sales and Marketing | Ray Sher, Farm Manager | Gary Edmondson, Director of Training  
Constant Ngoula, Assistant Farm Manager | Cathy Stewart, Volunteer Coordinator

# Recipes

Try out the recipes below or find more using our recipe finder: <http://plant-it-forward.org/farm-kitchen/favorite-recipes/>

## Beet and Goat Cheese Arugula Salad

### Ingredients

1/4 cup balsamic vinegar\*  
3 Tbsp. shallots, thinly sliced  
1 Tbsp. honey  
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
4-5 beets, leaves removed\*\*  
6 cups fresh arugula  
1/2 cup walnuts, toasted, coarsely chopped  
3 ounces soft fresh Swede Farm goat cheese, coarsely crumbled

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Whisk the vinegar, shallots, and honey in a medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in the oil.
3. Season the vinaigrette, to taste, with salt and pepper.
4. Wrap beets in aluminum foil and roast in 350 degree oven for 1 hour.
5. Remove beets from oven and keep them wrapped in foil for another 10 min so that the steam will loosen the peel. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Remove the peel from the beets. Cut beets into quarters. Toss the quartered beets in the bowl of dressing to coat.
6. Remove the quartered beets and place on a piece of aluminum foil and into the 450 degree oven for 12 minutes until beets are slightly caramelized. Set aside and cool.
7. Toss the arugula and walnuts in a large bowl with enough vinaigrette to coat. Season the salad, to taste, with salt and pepper. Mound the salad atop 4 plates.
8. Arrange the beets around the salad.
9. Sprinkle with the goat cheese and serve.

\*I used Terra Verde strawberry balsamic vinegar, which can be purchased from Texas Hill Country Olive Company at Saturday morning market. This gave the salad a nice sweetness without adding the honey. \*\*beet greens can be used in salads or cooked

Original recipe: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/beet-and-goat-cheese-arugula-salad-recipe/index.html>

## Butter-braised Radishes with Sorrel

### Ingredients

1 cup vegetable stock or water\*  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 bunch radishes, greens removed, radishes quartered  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 packed ½ cup sorrel leaves, stems removed and thickly sliced

### Instructions

1. In a large skillet, bring the vegetable stock and butter to a boil over moderate heat. Add the radishes and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are crisp-tender and the liquid has thickened slightly, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to a shallow bowl. Scatter the sorrel over the top and serve.

\*Better than Bouillon vegetable base is wonderful.

Original recipe: <http://www.foodandwine.com/recipes/butter-braised-radishes-with-sorrel>

## Chard in Savory Provençal Sauce

This recipe is from Elizabeth Schneider's [Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini](#).

1 bunch Swiss chard  
¾ cup vegetable broth  
1 Tbsp. Ricard, Pernod, or other pastis\*  
1/8 tsp. kosher salt (omit if broth is salted)  
¼ tsp. dried thyme  
1/8 tsp. fennel seeds  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
2 garlic cloves  
2 oil-packed anchovy fillets  
½ Tbsp. capers  
Pepper

### Preparing the chard:

Cut the stems off the leaves. Cut the stems diagonally into 1.5 in slices. In a sauté pan, combine the broth, Ricard, salt, thyme, fennel, and olive oil. Add 1 sliced garlic clove and bring to boil. Add the stems, cover and simmer for 10 min.

Stack the leaves and cut into ½ in strips. Raise heat to medium and spread leaves over stems. Cover and steam until tender, about 5-10min.

In a mortar, crush 1 garlic clove with anchovies and capers. Scoop a little liquid from the pan and add to the mixture, blend well, then add mixture back to the pan and simmer to blend. Add pepper to taste. Serve hot or at room temperature. \*If you do not have Ricard, Pernod, or other Pastis you can use 18 cup dry vermouth and double the amount of fennel seeds.

## Salad with Fennel and Apple Cider Vinaigrette

### Dressing:

1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar  
2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil or walnut oil  
1 tsp. Dijon mustard  
2 tsp. finely chopped shallots  
1/4 tsp. fine sea salt  
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon  
Freshly ground black pepper

### Salad:

½ bag lettuce mix or arugula (4 oz.)  
1 small fennel bulb, trimmed and cut into thin strips (reserve a few fronds for garnish)  
½ cup toasted walnuts

Combine vinegar, mustard, shallots, tarragon, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Gradually whisk in the oil. Add the lettuce and fennel to bowl and toss to coat. Garnish with fennel fronds and top with toasted walnuts. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper if necessary.