



May 16, 2008

Newsletter

Issue #21

# BloomingNow!

## Features Fresh from the Farm

Community

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## From the field...

It has been a busy month since our three interns arrived in early April and took the plunge into the farming season. The theme this time of year is plant, plant, plant! Soon enough we'll be weeding, thinning and harvesting, but for now it's planting time. After quite a few long days we have transplanted over 18,000 onions, 11 beds of greenhouse tomatoes, as well as our first rotation of field tomatoes, sweet corn, fennel, eggplants, sweet peppers, hot peppers, cucumbers, and summer squash, 3 head lettuce rotations, kale, swiss chard, cabbage, collards, and over 1200 pounds of potato seed- and don't forget the flow-

ers! We direct seeded carrots, beets, dill and cilantro, spring turnips and spring radishes as well as spring greens, and fall parsnips. And we spent plenty of time in the greenhouse seeding flats for upcoming plantings like winter squash. We also put up some pea trellises for our transplanted sugar snap peas. They have enjoyed the last few days of cooler weather and long drinks. Not every plant likes summer heat in April! Our greenhouse tomatoes have begun their journey. Some, like the heirlooms, we continuously prune and trellis up lines hanging from the greenhouse ceiling, removing suckers and developing leaders-

they get hours of attention and will eventually be distributed to the CSA, sold to restaurants and venture to the farmers market. The shorter determinant varieties, colored red, orange and yellow, we will weave into a wall-like trellis around stakes interspersed with the plants, the same way we handle our red field tomatoes. As soon as the fields dry out again, we are looking forward to seeding the first string beans, and transplanting cherry tomatoes, melons, fall leeks, celeriac and sweet potatoes. The first CSA pick-up will be Tuesday May 27 and Friday May 30th. Look forward to seeing you! - Farmer Tricia

## News and Notes:

- **First Pick-up** will be **Tuesday May 27th** and **Friday May 30th**. Please remember if you are a split share, to coordinate with your partner about who will pick up first, and rotate weeks there on. Otherwise, please send only one partner to pick-up and split your share off site. Thank you!
- **Not sure what pick-up day you registered for?** Send us an email and we'll let you know.
- **Coming up in the share:** spring onions, basil, head lettuce, spinach, arugula, and cooking greens such as kale, cabbage and bok choy.
- **The Herbal Home and Body Series: classes offered by local master herbalist-** see our online calendar for class info.
- **CSA payments were due in full by May 1.** There are still a few we haven't received yet. Please send them in or call us to discuss a payment plan.
- If you have not received a **CSA Rough Guide** in the mail please let us know. If you have, be sure to read it before the first pick-up.
- **Our interns are seeking a few things for their house:** a dish drying rack; cd player or stereo; small to medium pots with lids; cheese grater; bike; bike pump; laundry basket; empty picture frames for wall art. If you would like to donate any of these things, let us know. Thank you!!

## Keeping Your Produce Fresh with the E.G.G., by Carla Klimuk

One thing about eating local foods and handpicked harvests, such as those here at Blooming Glen Farm is that I want to make the most of my foods before they go bad. Canning and preserving, dehydrating and drying are methods I'll write about soon, but even now, before the official harvest begins, I try to keep the fresh food I purchase at the store and co-op around as long as I can in the refrigerator and on my counter and table.

One tool you can use right now to help keep your fruits

and vegetables from premature spoiling and rotting in your refrigerator and even your fruit bowl, is to remove the conditions that promote it. Industrial vegetable shippers control the environment of their storehouses and shipping containers, and utilize many practices such as wax coatings and chemical spraying that are very unfriendly to our health and to the environment. A much healthier and earth conscious approach is to understand what happens when vegetables and fruits ripen, and to prevent or remove the conditions that

cause it to happen prematurely.

As fruits and vegetables ripen, they give off a gas called **ethylene**. While not harmful to humans, continued exposure causes other fruits and vegetables to ripen more quickly. Damaged fruit releases copious amounts of it as well. Trapped within a plastic bag or wrap, or within the confined area of your vegetable crisper or refrigerator, this becomes concentrated, and the gas can take a good harvest and make it go bad quickly. It's the timeless

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## Spinach: from Asia to Blooming Glen

Spinach comes from central and southwestern Asia where it may have originated from *Spinacia tetrandra*, which is still gathered as a wild edible green in Anatolia. The diffusion of spinach into the Mediterranean was almost certainly the result of Arab ingenuity. Spinach, which does not grow well in hot weather, was successfully cultivated in the hot and arid Mediterranean climate by Arab agronomists through the use of sophisticated irrigation techniques probably as early as the eighth century A.D. The first references to spinach are from Sasanian Persia (about 226-640 A.D.) and we know that in 647 it was taken from Nepal to China as a gift from the King where it was, and still is, known as the "Persian green." (source: [cliffordawright.com](#))

Spinach is well known as a vitamin -and mineral-packed food. Spinach is an excellent source of vitamin K, vitamin A, manganese, folate, magnesium, iron, vitamin C, vitamin B2, calcium, potassium, and vitamin B6. It is a very good source of dietary fiber, copper, protein, phosphorous, zinc and vitamin E. In addition, it is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, niacin, and selenium.\*

Fresh spinach has a lovely green color and retains a delicate texture that is wonderful in salads. Eaten raw, spinach has a mild, sweet taste. When cooked, the flavor becomes more acidic and robust. There are four kinds of spinach that are readily available: savoy has crisp, creased curly leaves

that have a springy texture; smooth-leaf has flat, unwrinkled, spade-shaped leaves, while semi-savoy is similar in texture to savoy but is not as crinkled in appearance; baby spinach is great for use in salads as it has a sweeter taste.

Store fresh spinach loosely packed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper where it will keep fresh for about five days. Do not wash it before storing as the moisture will cause it to spoil. Avoid storing cooked spinach as it will not keep very well. Before use, make sure to wash spinach very well as it collects sand and dirt in its leaves. Cut away any overly thick stems to ensure even cooking. If cooking the spinach, there is no need to dry it after washing. The water will help it cook. However, if you are using it in a salad, make sure to dry the leaves using either a salad spinner or by shaking in a colander. Spinach is a delicious and healthy way to get much needed nutrients. Experiment with it in salads, as a side dish, or even as the main dish in a casserole - one of my personal favorite ways to eat it. Spinach is good for you, tasty, and as Popeye reminds us, it'll help you grow big and strong!

\*The World's Healthiest Foods:  
<http://www.whfoods.org>

Article compiled by Rachel Dilkus, food lover and fiber enthusiast.

## Green Rice

1 1/2 Cups white rice  
1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil  
2 1/4 cups water  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3 scallions  
4 cups loosely packed spinach (about 3 ounces)  
Pinch of black pepper

Rinse and drain the rice. In a saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, on high heat briefly sauté the rice in 1 tsp. of the oil, stirring to coat each grain. Add the water and salt, bring to a boil, cover and reduce the heat to very low. Cook until the water is absorbed, about 12-15 minutes.

While the rice cooks, coarsely chop the scallions and rinse the spinach. In a large skillet, sauté the scallions in 2 teaspoons of the oil for a minute or two. Add the spinach and pepper, cover, and cook until just wilted and still bright green, about 2 minutes. In a blender, puree the spinach and scallions until smooth, adding a little water, if necessary.

When the rice is done, fluff it with a fork, stir in the spinach puree, and serve.

Ingredient Notes: This recipe is just fine with brown rice, but it will take a bit longer to cook and the green color will be muted. Add fresh herbs to the blender: about 2 tablespoons of dill, basil or tarragon.

Source: Moosewood Restaurant Simple Suppers

## Chickpeas and Spinach Stew

This main dish is seasoned with *zaatar*, a Middle Eastern spice mixture of sumac, thyme, hyssop and sesame seeds. Available at [www.kalustvans.com](http://www.kalustvans.com), or use dried thyme, oregano or cumin, instead. Serves 4.

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1-1/2 cup diced onion  
8 cloves garlic, sliced  
1-1/2 tablespoons zaatar  
1 cup chicken stock  
3 cups cooked chickpeas  
1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes  
12 ounces fresh greenmarket spinach salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
4 cups cooked brown rice  
1 cup Greek yogurt  
thin lemon wedges (optional)

Heat olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and zaatar and cook, stirring frequently, 2 minutes. Cover pot, lower heat and simmer 7 to 10 minutes. Add chicken stock, canned chickpeas and tomato; cover and cook 10 minutes at medium-high. Add spinach, cover for 10 more minutes. Remove from heat and serve over brown rice, adding yogurt, lemon wedges and a sprinkle of zaatar as desired.

Source: The Green Guide, Amy's Kitchen  
<http://www.thegreenguide.com>

## Keeping Your Produce Fresh, continued from page 1

adage, 'One bad apple spoils the whole bunch' scenario before your eyes.

You might have seen the green bags offered on T.V. and internet, however if you are counting the costs and looking to live greener, these are not recyclable and the replacing of the bags will add up to lots of money in the long run. I've found one great way that is very inexpensive and will have you saving money and enjoying your harvest instead of throwing it away because it is over ripe.

**Called a Gas EGG**, an acronym for **ethylene gas guardian**, it is placed in your refrigerator or vegetable drawer, or a large fruit bowl, and will help absorb the ethylene gas that is omitted by the damaged and ripening veggies. Each egg takes up a tiny amount of room and there is a noticeable increase in how long your fruit remains edible.

There is now research being conducted on whether ethylene gas contributes to the growth of harmful bacteria on produce. Removal of the ethylene gas may help prevent bacteria induced illnesses (including e coli contamination), in addition to keeping your harvest crisp, nutritious, and pleasant

on the eyes.

Refill 'eggs' and other great storage gadgets and information are also found throughout the product's website. They even have a downloadable file with a chart of the ethylene content of different varieties of fruits and veggies, helping you determine where to store the different varieties of your harvest in the refrigerator.

Check out the following website for more info on the natural ingredients and the chemistry behind the EGG, as well as to purchase online: [www.4theegg.com](http://www.4theegg.com)

This product can also be found at some Whole Foods Markets.

Carla Lynne Klimuk is a master herbalist with over 14 years of experience making plant medicines and ethnic wild crafting. She is a freelance writer, writes an online weblog, and is publisher of a biweekly newsletter filled with lots of homesteading, herbal and plant information, whole food recipes, and natural health news. She also owns Shade Tree Herbs [www.shadetreeherbs.com](http://www.shadetreeherbs.com). Check out Blooming Glen Farm's online calendar for a description of the different classes she will offer at the farm this season.