What’s New On The Farm

Anyone reading this is in touch with your culinary creative side, having committed for a whole summer to weekly making the most of whatever produce the student farm can offer you. We salute you! Some fun stuff is coming up soon and we’re getting the hang of succession planting.

Zen in the Kitchen

Why so much kale, chard and basil? Many of the crops we cultivate like to be harvested frequently or even continuously; they’re adapted to being foraged.

Some things we’ve learned

We’ve noticed that the strawberry patch loves all the visitors. The more u pick, the more and bigger berries it produces!

Many herbs love to be continuously harvested. When basil is cut just above two leaves of new growth, each leaf stem grows two new productive branches which can then be cut, eventually creating a giant bushy basil plant from which a great deal can be harvested at one time.

Mature chard and kale keep on growing new foliage for harvest. When they are harvested regularly, even when new growth slows in high temperatures, they won’t bolt.

Mature mizuna and arugula like to be harvested continuously too, without bolting, but we didn’t know that, so we surrendered a bunch of mizuna to the bugs - and it still grew back delicious! Albeit uglier for the beetle feasting.

Some ideas for preparation

Basil freezes well pureed with oil or made into pesto, and we always have a ton of extra if you want a large quantity any week.

Chard and kale are really versatile veggies – greens for smoothies!! - and everything is delicious sautéed with butter, lemon and salt.

All herbs add unique flavor to any entree. For hot dishes, throw them on last and let the warmth of the dish bring out their flavor. For cold sandwiches and salads, chop the herbs finely and add to the dressing or sprinkle on top.

The farm is revealing that mother nature loves to reward us for paying attention while we feed ourselves abundantly. We hope even our sometimes monotonous abundance inspires humor and creativity, or at least Zen, in the kitchen.
It’s easy to look past the weeds at the farm when you’re fascinated by how fast the kale is growing, or how the radishes seemingly sprung up out of nowhere, or the kohlrabi forming huge bulbs almost overnight... But after spending so much time anticipating and removing weeds, I’ve begun to pay a bit more attention to them. Why are they so good at disguising themselves and growing near plants that look similar to them? What makes a weed a weed, and especially when the weed is actually edible and tasty? The latter question in particular has been on my mind this week.

I am not the first to ask the question of what makes a weed a weed. An article by the same title by Don Morishita of the Weed Science Society of America informed me that weeds are often distinguished by having some of several qualities, including an ability to produce lots of seeds, their seeds being able to remain dormant in soil for a long time as they wait for good conditions, being capable of establishing themselves quickly, spreading easily, and growing in inhospitable locations (http://wssa.net/wssa/weed/articles/wssa-what-makes-a-weed/).

A couple of weeks ago some Boy Scouts came to the farm. One of the Scout leaders mentioned to us that a weed growing among the kohlrabi was actually edible. We tried it, and it was quite tasty! This plant is called purslane. It tastes a bit sour - something I enjoy, but it can also be boiled to remove this flavor. And because it doesn’t compete with our crops for nitrogen in the soil, it actually can be left as a ground cover while more competitive weeds are removed.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is said to have described weeds as plants whose virtues have not yet been discovered. The following are a few other plants we’ve found at the farm, along with information about their qualities. (Don’t worry, your shares will still include the usual intentionally grown crops!)

Catmint:

Here’s what remains of the catmint plant growing in one of our hoop houses... I occasionally harvest it for my cats!
Clover:
Useful as a nitrogen-fixing cover crop, clover is also used as a cleansing anti-inflammatory tea.

Dandelion:
The entire dandelion plant (roots, leaves, and flower) can be eaten, and has historically been used to improve digestion.

Burdock:
Burdock is a popular food in Japan. The leaves, peeled stalks, and root can all be eaten. In Japan the root is consumed to support the immune system and digestion.

Jewelweed:
Jewelweed is an excellent treatment for poison ivy and stinging nettles. I experienced this first-hand while backpacking first through a patch of stinging nettle and then, as the stinging set in, immediately hiking through a patch of jewelweed growing next to the nettles on the trail. Luckily I knew it was a remedy, and my friends and I were able to rub it on our skin to stop the burning. They also produce beautiful flowers!

Yarrow:
Yarrow is a nutrient accumulator, making it a nutrient-rich mulch. It attracts beneficial insects and pollinators and serves well as a ground cover. It also has many medicinal uses.

**This information is by no means all the information you would need to harvest these crops for your own use - please use caution and consult other sources if foraging interests you.

Purslane happily taking up ground-space in the shade of our brassicas
What’s In The Basket

New flavors!

**Microgreens** - Pea shoots and spicy mustard microgreens - really nice addition to soups, salads and sandwiches

**Beet greens** - Can be steamed or sauteed like spinach - great in omelets, chopped and added to pasta or soup, or served as a side dish

**Green onions** - Another plant that just keeps on growing whatever the temperature. Soups, omelets, salads, pasta, chicken salad - is there anything that doesn’t benefit from a sprinkle of finely chopped green onion?

**Herb bouquet** - the best looking dill, cilantro, arugula, parsley and mizuna

**Radishes** - These gorgeous tubers are spicy and juicy, you’ve never had anything like them

**Kohlrabi** - Can you believe how pretty this thing is?! Recipe ideas below

**Peas** - Snap peas are so fun! Sautee these or just snack on them

Coming up - Chard, beets, basil, fennel microgreens. Soon: Tomatoes

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**Un-RECIPE FOR Kohlrabi Apple Slaw**

An Un-Recipe offers guidelines to create delicious dishes based on the way ingredients, kitchen tools and cooks interact in the kitchen. Email us with questions!

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 small kohlrabi
- 1 large apple
- 1/3 cup grated gouda cheese
- 1/4 cup fresh tarragon leaves
- 3 TB toasted sunflower seeds*
- Lemon zest, to taste
- 1 to 2 TB olive oil
- 1 to 2 TB lemon juice
- Flaky sea salt (like Maldon) and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Cut apple and kohlrabi into matchsticks about ¼” wide. Toss in a bowl together
2. Add the cheese, if using, and the tarragon leaves and sunflower seeds. Shave lemon zest liberally over the bowl (I probably used about half of a small lemon’s worth or more).
3. Drizzle in 1 tablespoon olive oil and 1 tablespoon lemon juice, then sprinkle lightly with salt and black pepper. Use your hands to gently toss the salad, then add another drizzle of olive oil and lemon juice if the salad seems dry.
4. Finish with another light sprinkle of salt and pepper and serve immediately.