Jupiter's Fingers

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**Jupiter’s Fingers**

Broccoli can be beautiful, you know. I recently received a huge, extra-lush head from the farm, and it’s a glaring contrast to the homely results from my own attempt at growing it in relatively poor, first year garden soil. Adding to that, everything that crawls, flies, or slithers in and around my garden seems to want to take a bite out of it! Deer, caterpillars, aphids, and even the birds get in on the action, delicately plucking out individual florets like they own the place. My broccoli heads look less like miniature trees and more like a grove of saplings mown down by elephants.

But if a lot of different things want to feast on it, maybe that’s a good sign. I can’t blame ’em. Maybe they don’t appreciate the sweet, cabbagey flavors and crisp-tender texture in quite the same way that humans do, but the sheer amount of nutrients packed in this popular American veggie might have something to do with the demand. Vitamin A, C, and K are present in spades, and as in other cabbage family plants, broccoli contains potent cancer-fighting compounds. Not only that, recent research shows that a flavonoid in broccoli called kaempferol has some ability to lessen the severity of allergies, though I doubt the caterpillars are eating my broccoli because of hay fever!

This is an Italian vegetable through and through. When the Etruscans first settled in Northern Italy, bringing with them an ancient variety of broccoli, it became among the early Roman’s most favored vegetables, where they called it “the five fingers of Jupiter.” This antiquated type had small purple heads, and similar varieties can still be found today. Our varieties at the farm are the more widely known large-headed type, distant offspring originally brought to America by Italian immigrants over the course of a few hundred years. It remained an important part of the Italian immigrant community, but didn’t spread much. The plant was obscure enough that when broccoli finally became somewhat popular in the 1920’s, some people thought that it was a newly developed vegetable altogether!

But it’s no newcomer to us now. Less well known vegetables, sometimes very old, have a habit of popping in and out of favor through the ages. Broccoli has become a true staple, and not only in Italy. You could almost consider it a part of our national cuisine really, one where the foods of the world continue to intermingle and evolve. I have to wonder what currently unknown veggies will make themselves a prominent place in the diet of the future, and whether I’m missing out!

*Andrew Croft*

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**Pick Your Protein ‘Beef’ and Broccoli**

So you are feeling like Chinese tonight, but don’t want to deal with the hassle of getting take-out. This recipe is perfect for you. This quick and easy beef and broccoli recipe can easily be modified for almost any type of protein. So whether you have beef, chicken, pork, or seitan in the fridge it is time to cook a pot of rice, a side of steamed Asian greens and make some Chinese for dinner.

**Ready In:** 1 hr (1.5 hr is using tofu or seitan)  
**Serves:** 2

**Ingredients**

- 2 Tablespoons oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 ½ Tablespoons rice wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon white sugar
- ½ teaspoon corn starch
- 6 ounces of your desired protein (pre-drained if tofu)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 small head of broccoli

**Directions**

1. Cube your chosen protein into ¼ inch chunks.
2. Whisk the oyster sauce, sesame oil, sherry, soy sauce, sugar and corn starch in a bowl until the sugar has dissolved.
3. Put the protein into the bowl and gently mix until the protein is fully coated by the marinade.
4. Cover the bowl and let protein marinate in the fridge for at least 30 minutes (at least 1 hour for tofu and seitan) and up to 4 hours.
5. Heat half the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium high heat.
6. Chop up the broccoli into bite sized chunks and put into hot oil.
7. Constantly move the broccoli in the pan for 7 minutes then remove from pan.
8. Add the other half of the vegetable oil to the hot skillet.
9. Cook the pour the protein and marinade into the skillet.
10. Constantly move the protein until it is completely cooked (should be about 3 minutes for tofu, 5 for beef and seitan, or 7 minutes for chicken and pork) and the marinade has formed a glaze.
11. Add the broccoli back into the hot skillet.
12. Stir the protein and broccoli together for three minutes.
13. Serve and Enjoy!

*Note if you are going to be making the Beef and Broccoli dish with the large flowered broccoli you need to add an extra half teaspoon of sugar to make the flavor balance come out right.

**Recipe by Shannon Babb**
**Announcements**

**Meet the Weed-Dandelion**
The scientific name for the Dandelion happens to be *Taraxacum officinale* which literally means ‘the official remedy for disorders.’ It is a good name for a plant that has as much calcium as a glass of milk and is also dense in potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Historically this super food helped to stave off starvation in America’s first colonists and pioneers. Native to Europe it is still actually grown like lettuce in parts of France and Germany. All parts of the plant are edible. The leaves are used like spinach, the root as a coffee substitute, and flowers as a salad garnish. If you are interested in trying to cook with dandelion let us know when you pick up your share. We would be happy to show you where to pick some organically grown dandelion and give you a recipe to try at home.

**Herbs in the Garden**

- Thyme  
- Lemon balm  
- Hyssop  
- Sage  
- Lavender  
- Catmint  
- Garlic chives  
- Greek oregano  
- Chives  
- Chamomile  
- Summer savory

**Volunteer hours:**

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9 am to 12 pm

**Missed pickup policy:**

If you forget to pickup your share for the week at your scheduled time, we are so sorry but you will have to forfeit the share for the week. If you let us know a week in advance that you will be gone, we can definitely work something out so you don’t miss a share. Also, you can have a friend, neighbor, or relative come pick up your share for you if you will be gone. They just need to come at your scheduled pickup time and let us know who they are picking up for.

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**On the Farm News**

Inspiration is something that I consider amazing. I know we are all different, but at the same time we are all equally fortunate for what we have. I can look at a sunrise or feel the early morning dew of a grassy field and can feel inspired in life. Have you ever searched out a good book or a good conversation with a loved one, been inspired, and felt the fortune of that moment? To seek inspiration throughout life can be rewarding and exciting, but to find it, is a blessing and a fortune. On our farm inspiration has a face...it is the face of Shannon Babb.

Shannon volunteers her intelligence, patience, and experience, and her presence on the farm graces us with inspiration. If I were to describe Shannon in one word I would have to say driven. Sorry Shannon no offense. Have you heard the saying “learn something new every day?” Shannon takes this to a literal level, as one of her goals in life is to actually learn something new every day.

After finishing her undergraduate in Watershed sciences, considered to be the most difficult degree in the NR department, Shannon continues as a graduate student in the PSC department. Driven to make a real impact in the world, Shannon currently studies soil science with her focus being soil restoration.

Sharing with us her exceptional skills as a chef, Shannon writes all of our recipes for this newsletter. Sadly, I do not have enough space here to efficiently introduce Shannon, her extensive knowledge, and all that she has done for us on the farm. However, if you would love some extra inspiration in life please come out to meet with Shannon, and feel her spirit, which we have all been so fortunate to know.

Shannon thank you so much for everything you have done for us this year. We always look forward to the days you join us here on the USU Student Farm.

*Eric Manrique*

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**What you might see in your next box**

- **kale**
- **bilko cabbage**
- **basil**