



June 2009

green string farm news

Farm News

In the Store

- artichokes
- asparagus
- baby bok choy
- beets
- curly cress (pepper grass)
- fava beans
- fresh herbs
- green garlic
- leeks
- lettuce
- red dandelion greens
- red spring onions
- rocket (arugula)
- cherries
- lemons
- oranges
- strawberries
- dried cayenne peppers
- dried serrano peppers
- almonds
- eggs
- cheddar cheese
- organic monterey jack
- ground beef
- beef cuts

Summer's so close you can almost taste it -- in fact, at Green String we've already got the first tastes of summer. Our tiny strawberries are melt-in-your-mouth yummy, we're harvesting the first of the cherries, and there are only a few weeks separating us from an overabundance of squash, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and glorious summer fruit.

We've also started harvesting two of our most delicious weeds, amaranth and purslane. Toss a handful of either into your next salad for a special treat. And the spring specialties are going fast, so we're savoring the last of this year's artichokes and asparagus.

Of course, our most important crop is in transition period too -- the Spring 09 interns are moving on and on June 1, the Summer 09 interns have moved in! The summer session consists of a whopping 15 new interns, so while we're sad to say goodbye to Cody, Hannah, Mark, Phil, and Sean (Katrina is staying on for a second semester, while Jenny and Chris have been upgraded from interns to helpers), there's not much time to mope -- there's so much to do!

How to Look at a Plant

One of the first things Bob Cannard teaches students when they arrive on the farm is how to look at plants. It may seem silly, but there's so much plants can tell you if you just know how to look properly. Bob emphasises using common senses (particularly sight, touch, and taste) to analyze a plant's well-being.

First, look at **how the plant is holding itself**. Is it standing up, proud and tall, or is it sagging? Some plants will naturally stand strongly on its own stem, while others twine around structures or sprawl out on the ground, but whatever it is, it should have a certain amount of sturdiness.

While you're looking at that, check out the **color**. Are the leaves and stem paler than they should be? What about blotches? Tear off a leaf and you can test the **leaf's tear strength**: pinch the leaf with both hands and slowly try to tear the leaf by pulling your hands apart,

or bending the leaf over your thumbs -- it should stretch before it breaks.

If you have enough of the crop to pull up one plant, do so. The plant shouldn't come out too easily, but should have **strong, sturdy anchorage**. Next, look at the roots. A plant with only a few long roots is probably "searching" in the soil for something it's lacking (e.g. water, nutrients). Happy plants will have smaller, more **fibrous roots**, and there will be more of them.

Rocket Pesto

Chris has been perfecting this grown-up pesto for months, and he's put it on everything -- pasta, pizza, sandwiches, lasagne, crackers, and everything else he can get his hands on. To follow this freeform recipe, you'll have to get in Chris's cooking state of mind and just keep tasting it until it seems right.

- * rocket (arugula)
- * olive oil
- pinenuts or walnuts
- Parmesan cheese
- salt and pepper

1. Open up your food processor.
2. Throw in whatever seems like an appropriate amount of each ingredient.
3. Process until well blended. Taste and check consistency.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you're pleased with the result.

Fusilli with White Sauce, Favas, and Rocket

This pasta dish is great hot out of the pan, but is perfectly delicious as a cold dish for a picnic, too. Just make sure to overseason slightly if you're planning to serve it cold. Lots of fresh pepper brings out the peppery flavor of the rocket, and whole wheat pasta makes this a substantial meal. *Serves 4*

- 2 T butter
- * 1 leek, thinly sliced
- * 1 C shelled, blanched, and peeled fava beans (about 20 pods)
- salt, to taste
- 2 T flour
- 1 C milk
- 1/2 C water or broth
- 1/2 lb whole wheat fusilli, cooked
- * 1 big handful rocket
- freshly ground pepper, to taste

1. Melt butter in a wide saucepan.
2. Add leeks, favas, and salt, and cook over moderate heat until the leeks and favas have softened somewhat.
3. Stir in flour. Cook for about 2 minutes, stirring.
4. Slowly add milk and water or broth, stirring all the while to keep lumps from forming.
5. When sauce begins to simmer, remove from heat and stir in pasta. Add rocket and stir until it wilts, then season with freshly ground black pepper (lots of pepper). Add more salt if needed.

Ridiculously Easy Tomato Couscous

The tomato sauce we sell at the Green String store is an unflavored, no-funny-business sort of product, so you can just as easily make pasta sauce as soup, or, my favorite, a big pile of tomato-infused couscous. If you keep your pantry stocked, you can make this dish in less than 10 minutes. Or class it up a bit by sweating some leeks or green garlic in the pan before adding the sauce -- but it's delicious without it too. *Serves 2-4*

- * 1 pint tomato sauce
- * 1 T red wine vinegar
- * leaves from 1 or 2 sprigs oregano
- 1 t coarse salt
- * (optional) 1 cayenne pepper, finely chopped
- 1 C quick-cooking couscous
- * 2 T olive oil
- freshly ground pepper, to taste

1. Place tomato sauce, vinegar, oregano, salt, and optional cayenne in a small saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, and bring to a simmer.
2. Add couscous and briefly stir to combine. Cover and turn off heat.
3. Allow to sit for 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork and add olive oil, pepper, and adjust seasoning. Serve and top with nutritional yeast for an *umami* taste or Parmesan for something more traditional.