

Prairieland CSA Week 4

Pickup begins at 4 pm and runs through 7 pm in the garages at 714 W Iowa in Urbana and 701 W Washington in Champaign. Please do not pull into the driveway in Urbana. Please observe all parking regulations in Champaign. Use the driveway at 701 or Harris St. for parking, if necessary.

News From the Farm

The Moores caught a break and got just the right amount of rain out of the last few storms, no two- and three-inch deluges. So they were able to transplant about 15,000 plants into the field late last week. However, the heat has put some into overdrive, hence the abundance of lettuce today and the earliest broccoli we've seen in years.

Today's Haul

1 bunch green onions
1 bunch radishes
1 greenhouse greens - lettuce, chard (yellow leaves), and spinach mix
kohlrabies
1 head red lettuce
1 head green lettuce
1 small head broccoli
spearmint

Recipes and Suggestions

If your definition of salad is a small pile of greens on your plate or a tiny plate to the side of your dinner plate, you may have to rethink that definition this week. The heat and humidity have brought armloads of lettuce and baby greens this week. Think main dish salads, wilted lettuce, Asian lettuce wraps, chickpea salad wraps...

Lettuce and Greens

Peel off all the lettuce leaves, swish them in water and rinse them again to remove the sand. If you don't have a salad spinner, place leaves in a flour sack towel. Gather the ends together, go outdoors, and do your best Dara Torres backstroke impression.

Baby greens are good to go out of the bag. The yellow leaves are baby swiss chard. Some bags may also contain spinach.

If you haven't made your way through your greens by the weekend, try the soup recipe on page 46 of *Recipes from America's Small Farms*.

Use your lettuce as a bed for chicken, tofu, or chick pea salad or make salad wraps. See <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Vegetarian-Chickpea-Sandwich-Filling/Detail.aspx> for a basic chickpea salad recipe. Feel free to substitute green onion for the onion and add pickle relish if you like. A teaspoon of chopped mint could be a great addition, as well. Save money by buying dried chickpeas. Soak them for at least 4 hours. Then cook them with 2 parts water for 8 hours on high in a crockpot or slow cooker.

Asian lettuce wraps typically contain ground or sliced meat or tofu that has been marinated or

cooked with soy and/or fish sauce, cellophane noodles, scallions, and herbs like mint, basil and/or cilantro. Some have seasonal additions like cucumber, bean sprouts, or shredded carrot. They also may have chopped peanuts. The sauces can range from soy-based to thicker hoisin-based sauces. Here is the classic Vietnamese version: <http://lickmyspoon.com/sfeats/vietnamese-lettuce-wraps-and-yay-for-asians/> and some classic Vietnamese sauces that are good with lots of dishes including lettuce wraps: http://articles.sfgate.com/2001-08-15/food/17611949_1_sauce-dipping-grilled-pork

Alternatively you could fill lettuce wraps with chicken, pork, or tofu sate, or curried chicken or tofu salad.

For more lettuce wrap suggestions, see <http://www.bellybytes.com/recipes/wraps.shtml>

There is also the classic taco salad with ground meat/soy or shredded chicken on a generous bed of lettuce. Add some cheese, salsa, and a few sliced black olives. Garnish with tortilla chips.

For wilted lettuce see:

http://www.smilepolitely.com/food/taking_advantage_of_local_swiss_chard/

Radishes

I'm telling you, radish crostini is where it's at. The sauce is based on the classic Italian bagna cauda, which is the Italian answer to fondue. What's not to love about olive oil and garlic?

You can find it the recipe in last week's newsletter, here:

<http://www.prairielandcsa.org/newsletters.html>

Broccoli

No it does not taste like feckless been shipped on a truck and in storage facilities for a week California broccoli. This is what broccoli should taste like. Add it raw or lightly steamed to salads. Do as little as possible to it.

Kohlrabi

We ate tons of kohlrabi on our produce, grain, and hog farm, so it's taken me a while to comprehend that not everyone is familiar with this crop. Or, that anyone might not like it.

Kohlrabies are sweet like young cabbage but have the crispy texture of a turnip. You can peel them and eat them raw on salads and as part of vegetable platters. You can also grate them for slaws. Or, you can steam them, or bake them in gratins. The leaves also are edible like cabbage leaves. Throw them in stir fries.

See the recipes on the PCSA website:

<http://www.prairielandcsa.org/recipes/kohlrabi.html>

Spearmint

Mint is an integral part of French and Vietnamese cuisine. Sadly, it is mostly relegated to tea in the U.S. But you have an opportunity to change that this week.

Lentils and Lentil Salad

Try adding a fistful of chopped fresh mint to lentils eaten warm, or dressed with a vinaigrette and served at room temperature or chilled. If you opt for chilled, add a little lemon zest, as well,

possibly some crumbled feta

Mint-Lemon Water

Speaking of lemon zest, you can make a great summer beverage with the zest of half a lemon and a few sprigs of mint. Pour a quart of just simmering water over it and allow it to steep for a few minutes. Strain and chill.

Mojito

And then there's the beverage from Cuba, the Mojito, which is greatly abused in C-U. Make your own in self defense. Place 1/2 ounce simple syrup, 8 to 10 sprigs of mint, and a splash of soda water in a chilled 16 oz tumbler. Lightly muddle the mint until it becomes fragrant. Squeeze in the juice from 2 lime halves. Add one of the hulls to the glass and muddle it, as well. Add 2 to 3 ounces of rum, stir, and fill with ice. Top with soda water and garnish with a mint sprig.

To make simple syrup dissolve 2 cups sugar in one cup boiling water. The muddler for this drink is not the spoon kind but a batida which looks more like a clave:

<http://www.keepthebeatinc.com/images/ClaveHandsWhiteSmall0008.jpg>

Mint Iced Tea and Fruit Tea/Punch

2 cups boiling water

6 sprigs mint

3 tea bags

2 cups boiling water

1 c sugar or less

1 qt cold water

Pour 2 cups of boiling water over mint and tea bags. Steep for 20 minutes. Pour 2 cups boiling water over sugar. When sugar is dissolved, add strained mint and tea. Stir in cold water. Chill.

Alternatively add fruit juice instead of sugar to sweeten. Orange or apricot nectar or a combination work well. For punch, add gingerale.

Mint Sorbet

<http://www.recipesource.com/desserts/sorbet/mint-sorbet1.html>

Lavender or Mint Cookies

1/4 c butter softened

1/2 c sugar

1 egg

1 T chopped fresh mint or lavender

1 c flour

1 t baking soda

1/4 t salt

Cream butter and sugar. Stir in egg and mint. Mix well. Mix dry ingredients and fold in. Drop by teaspoon onto cookie sheet. Bake at 375 for 7 to 10 minutes. These burn easily, so watch them carefully.

Mint Tea Cookies

1 c butter softened
1/2 c sugar
Scant 1/2 t peppermint oil
2 T chopped mint
2 c flour
Pinch salt
Granulated sugar

Cream butter and sugar. Stir in peppermint oil, mint, flour, and salt. Mix well and chill. Roll dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in sugar. Press onto cookie sheet . Bake at 350 for 10 minutes.

Mint Scones and Muffins

Add 1/4 c chopped mint to your favorite scone or muffin recipe.

Questions? Concerns? Please do not hesitate to let us know at 355-6279 or at info@prairielandcsa.org