

CASCADE FARM CSA
HARVEST NOTES



THIS WEEK'S HARVEST:

THURSDAY JUNE 24, 2010

Your harvest for this week may include:

- Beets
- Collard Greens
- Garlic Scapes
- Hakurai Turnips
- Kale (Red Russian)
- Kale (Toscana)
- Lettuce (Green, Romaine)
- Mizuna
- Onion
- Radish
- Swiss Chard

New for this week will be:

- Joi Choi

From the herb garden:

- Basil

NEWS AND UPDATES

Thanks again to our volunteers. Although it was hot today, we accomplished quite a bit. Your help is so appreciated and so important to what we do.

I hope everyone likes Joi Choi (like Pac Choi a variety of Chinese cabbage). The hot weather has continued so the plants are trying to bolt. We had to harvest a large amount so we don't lose it. We should have been able to harvest over several weeks but continued hot weather will cause the plant to seed and the stalks will become tough to eat. If you get too much joi choi to eat in a week, you can freeze what you do not use (see below).

The good news with continued hot weather is the plants that like it, such as eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes, are doing very well.

Enjoy your harvest!

JOI CHOI

Joi Choi (like Bok Choy) is a Chinese cabbage. It is commonly used in stir fry but can also be boiled or steamed.

Storage Tips

- Store unwashed wrapped in a paper towel for up to one week in the refrigerator
- To freeze, trim the roots and quarter the heads lengthways, wash under cold water and blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Cool in ice water, drain, and pat dry. Pack into freezer bags or containers and freeze (will keep for 12 months).

Cooking Tips

- The green leaf is often cooked separately from the much thicker, paler stalk
- In a stir fry, slice up the stalk and cooked for several minutes until tender and then add leaves for final 2 minutes of cooking
- Add garlic, ginger, and soy sauce or salt while cooking (goes well with sesame oil)
- Be sure not to overcook the Joi Choi the stalks should be tender and the leaves just wilted when done

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HERBS

Herbs are sometimes grown for their leaves, flowers, seeds, or roots. They are best used as soon as possible after harvesting (the longer they are stored the greater their flavor loss).

Storage Tips

- Do not wash herb leaves or aromatic oils and flavor will be lost.
- Long stem herbs (like basil, cilantro, and parsley can be stored in a glass with about an inch of water for up to a week.
- Rosemary, chives, and thyme can be stored for a week or longer in the refrigerators vegetable bin
- Herbs can also be air-dried (sun, oven, or dehydrator drying is not recommended because the herbs will lose too much flavor and color).
- Freezing works well with most herbs and they will maintain their quality for up to six months.

Basil

Basil is the ultimate complement to tomatoes (works well with onions, garlic, and olives also). The leaves are the prime part of the plant. For the most intense flavor, basil should be added at the end of the cooking process. To enjoy right off the plant, add a basil leaf between a slice of tomato and a slice of mozzarella cheese.

FEATURED RECIPES

Chicken Stir-fry with Boc Choi (or Joi Choi) and Garlic Sauce

(Adapted from Rhonda Parkinson on about.com)

Sweet choi and pungent garlic lend flavor to this stir-fried chicken recipe. I like to use a lot of joi choi with a recipe like this.

Ingredients:

- 3 medium chicken breasts, boneless and skinless
- 1 large or 2 medium heads of joi choi
- Marinade:
 - 1 TB Chinese rice wine or dry sherry
 - 1 green onion, diced
 - 2 tsp cornstarch
- Sauce:
 - 1/4 cup low-sodium chicken broth
 - 2 TB water
 - 1 tsp white rice vinegar
 - 1/2 tsp black rice vinegar
 - 1 clove garlic, finely chopped

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- 1/4 tsp salt
- Other:
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 4 teaspoons water
- 4 to 5 TB oil for stir-frying, as needed

Preparation:

Cut the chicken into thin strips about 2-inches long. Add the rice wine or sherry, green onion and the cornstarch. Marinate the chicken for 30 minutes.

While the chicken is marinating, prepare the joi choi and the sauce. Separate the joi choi leaves and stalks, and cut both cross-wise into thin strips.

Combine the sauce ingredients and set aside. Combine the cornstarch and water in a small bowl and set aside.

Heat wok (or large pan) and add 2 TB oil. When oil is ready, add the chicken and stir-fry until it turns white and is nearly cooked. (Stir-fry in two batches if necessary). Drain the stir-fried chicken on paper towels.

Clean out the wok and add 2 - 3 TB oil. When oil is ready, add the joi choi stalks. Stir-fry briefly and add the leaves.

Push the joi choi up to the sides of the wok and add the sauce in the middle. Turn up the heat to bring to a boil. Add the cornstarch/water mixture to the sauce and stir rapidly to thicken.

Add the chicken. Mix through and serve hot. Serves 4.