

Small CSA Contents:

- 1 bunch beets with tops
- 1 bunch carrots with tops
- 1 head cabbage
- 2 ct zucchini
- 2 ct squash
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 quart yogurt
- 1 head bibb lettuce
- Approx 1.5 lbs tomatoes
- Approx 1.5 lbs cherries
- 1 lb grassfed ground beef

Large Add-Ons – small plus items below

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 bunch swiss chard
- 1 bunch spinach
- 1 rack pork spareribs
- 1 lb Berkshire pork chorizo

Vegetarian Subs – in place of ground beef

- 2 packs luna burgers

Vegan –no ground beef or yogurt

- 1 pint raspberries

Beets. Nature's Candy!

Beets are one of my favorite items to put in the CSA. It is very versatile and has a long shelf life. The tops are edible as are the roots.

Beets get a bad reputation because of the canned and pickled products most folks grew up with. Fresh beets are not that way. They are full of flavor – earthy but yet sweet. In fact, beets are nearly 10% sugar!

This newsletter focuses on different ways to use your beets. These recipes are courtesy of the Grovewood Tavern. We hosted a Beet Lab there three weeks back. These are all recipes from that event.

A quick overview of ways to use beets:

- Separate the tops from the beets. Both should be refrigerated in plastic bags to help retain their moisture. They will last longer this way.
- Use the beet tops as a salad green (raw) or as a braising green. Remove the thick stem from the center and they are good to go.
- Beets are best ROASTED. Do not boil your beets. You lose important nutrients and flavor.

Roasted Beets

Cut the stems and roots from your beet bulbs. Clean the beets with a clean brush or rag and some cold tap water. Dry the beets.

Toss the beets with some olive oil and kosher salt and roast at 350 degrees until tender (insert fork to center...shouldn't be crunchy). The beets may be

eaten this way or peeled. To peel the beets, either let them cool or submerge them in ice water. Once cool, the skins will loosen up. Score one side of the beet start to peel the skin off.

Beet tip: Wear plastic gloves or you will have red fingers for days.

Saltibarsciai (Lithuanian chilled beet soup)

This recipe is an absolute must for your holiday weekend picnic. It is a perfect summer day soup with a gorgeous shade of pink. Try serving this dish cold with some fresh boiled potatoes, such as Yukon or Red Norland potatoes, sprinkled with dill.

Ingredients:

- 0.5 cup yogurt, kefir, or buttermilk
- 3 hard boiled eggs, roughly chopped
- 3 roasted medium beets, skinned and roughly chopped
- 1 cucumber, peeled and roughly chopped
- Minced fresh dill, to taste
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all the ingredients. Adjust seasonings to taste (approx tsp of salt and pepper). Garnish with dill and a dollop of crème fraiche or sour cream.

Vinegretas (Beet and Potato Salad)

Ingredients:

- Approx 0.5 lb navy or black beans (precooked weight), cooked
- 3 small red potatoes, unpeeled
- 3 hard boiled eggs
- 1 lb beets, roasted and peeled
- 2-3 large dill pickles or relish
- 1 small onion
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1.25 cups sour cream
- 2 tablespoon mayo
- 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp sugar (do not omit)
- 1-2 tsp fresh dill weed

Boil the potatoes. Cool and then peel them. Carefully dice the potatoes and add to the beans. Neatly dice the hard boiled eggs, beets, pickles, and onion. Add to the bean and potato mixture. Mix gently (gently), being careful not to damage the ingredients.

In a small bowl, blend together the remaining ingredients. Taste and adjust seasonings. Mix into salad.

Cover tightly and chill at least six hours. Shortly before serving, mix the salad well again. It will turn bright pink. Serve cold.

Beet and Apple Salad

A classic beet presentation is a fresh salad with chilled slices of roasted beets and goat cheese sprinkled on top. Add walnuts for additional flavor and texture. Dress with a light balsamic vinaigrette.

Beet Hummus

Ingredients:

- 0.5 lb beets (about 4 medium beets), cooked, peeled, and cubed
- 2 tablespoon tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 5 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (not the squeeze bottle)
- 1 small clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- Generous pinch sea salt or kosher salt
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Place all the ingredients in a food processor (or blender) and pulse until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings and ingredients as desired. Refrigerate for up to 3 days. Eat with pita chips or on crackers/crostini with a sliced cucumber.

Simple Borscht with Beet Greens (from Betsy P)

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch beets, approx 3 medium beets
- Beet greens
- 3 mushroom soup cubes

Cut the greens off the beets about 1 inch above the beet. Wash greens; set aside. Carefully wash the beets; place in large Dutch oven with six cups water. Bring to a simmer. Simmer for 20 minutes. Remove beets to ice water; reserve cooking water.

When cool enough, peel with a paper towel and dice into 1/2" pieces. Slice the beet greens and stems; chop leaves to bite-size pieces. Add beets and greens to water in Dutch oven. Break mushroom soup cubes up into the water and stir. Return to simmer and cook stems until soft. Serve with a tablespoon of plain yogurt or sour cream.

Other variations include carrots or cabbage cooked in with the soup to add more texture and different flavors. Experiment as you like!

Charkhils Mkhali (beet and walnut puree)

A hallmark of Georgian cuisine is mkhali, a vegetable puree to which herbs and ground walnuts are added. Mkhali is made from any number of different vegetables, though spinach and beets are favored. To make mkhali, you must depend on your palate for the amount of vinegar depends on the sweetness of the veggies.

You will need 1 lb roasted and peeled beets. While those are cooking, grind 0.5 cup walnuts with 3 cloves garlic and a half teaspoon salt. Add 0.5 cup chopped cilantro and continue grinding to make a fine paste. Transfer to a bowl. When the beets are soft, peel them and finely grate them in the food processor. Mix the beets and walnut mixture together by hand. Stir in 1 to 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar (to taste), 0.25 tsp coriander seed and 0.25 tsp thyme and black pepper to taste. This should be slightly tart. Refrigerate for two hours but then bring to room temperature before serving with crackers or pita.