



Colorado potato beetle larvae feeding on tomatillo.

GOOD BUG, BAD BUG

This weekend on a farm walk with visitors, we found a real, native lady bug busily foraging on aphids. With today's technology, it is easier than ever to snap a photo of an insect, upload it to social media and have it identified within a matter of minutes. We also found a similar looking bug called a spotted pink lady beetle that feeds on aphids and the Colorado potato bug larvae. The good bugs reminded us of our first season when we lost several crops to aphids and couldn't find a lady bug for miles. Since then, it has been a game of good bug versus bad bug.

A conventional farmer might be quick to treat an insect pest with a chemical insecticide. This would work in the short-term, but the pest would eventually return and it would have to be treated again. Overtime, the pest develops immunity to the chemical treatment and the new generations require a new chemical or they flourish because the predator population was never allowed to respond. Much the same as antibiotics in humans and animals.

On the other hand, allowing predators to find the pests will increase the good bug population and over time the two populations achieve a natural balance. Sometimes the predator is another insect. Specific flies and wasps will lay their eggs inside many of our pests. Their young feed on the host and kill it during metamorphosis into an adult. Other times it is a fungus or nematode feeding on the bad bug. Birds hunt in the brassicas for cabbage worms and even tiny shrews scavenge for grubs and maggots under the soil. We still get a few aphids, but we see lady bugs chomping them up almost as quickly as they hatch.

Yes, we do push the natural process at times by increasing the population of "good bugs" to prevent a complete crop loss. But bear in mind that when native species are utilized, they too will run their course and reach equilibrium thus allowing us to farm without synthetic chemicals which are generally detrimental to a wide range of insects including pollinators. Sleep better knowing the food from our farm is not part of an unscripted science experiment on the yet-to-be-determined effects of chemicals on the human body.

Entomologists in training,

eric + rebecca

IN THE SHARE

Snap Peas

Spinach

Green Oakleaf Lettuce

Vitamin Green Pac Choy

Scallions

Garlic Scapes

Parsley

Rhubarb

Cucumbers *large shares*

DINING OUT

This week enjoy sustainably grown We Grow produce and meats at these establishments. Let them know you appreciate the work it takes to support local farms!

Hill of Beans, Ogema

Forest Springs, Westboro

Uncommon Ground, Medford

eat well, live well

FARM DINNER

The Annual Farm-to-Table Dinner is coming up on Friday, July 13 at our farm. Appetizers served at 5:30, dinner starts at 6:30. Chef Jay Lucey will be leading our crew again this year and we are elated! The meal will feature a few new appetizers, our pasture-raised broiler chicken, and some new local brews as well. Farm members get first chance at a seat at the farm table, but we need to know by next week if you plan to attend. There is a waiting list for non-members who would like tickets so we need to hear from members by June 17. We ask for a \$35 donation from each attendee which includes dinner, two glasses of wine and na beverages.

SPINACH

This is a first for We Grow. We have never had enough spinach this late in the season to share it with the entire membership. What an unusual season! Our apologies for the holes in the leaves and mud from heavy rains. Wash well!

While spinach is loaded with iron, its absorption is blocked by naturally occurring oxalic acid. An easy way to solve this problem is to pair spinach with a food high in vitamin C. Mandarin oranges or lemon juice. Another way to reduce the power of oxalic acid is to boil for at least two minutes.

We often hear about how good spinach is for the eyes and bones, but few folks know it aides digestion. Spinach eases constipation and protects the mucus lining of the stomach, keeping us free of ulcers. It also flushes out toxins from the colon.

Eat spinach for the skin care benefits too. The bounty of vitamins and minerals can bring you quick relief from dry, itchy skin and lavish you with a radiant complexion. Regular consumption of fresh, organic spinach juice has been shown to improve skin health dramatically. Feel good and look great too!

OAKLEAF LETTUCE

This green leaf variety is a great option this time of year as it doesn't tend to become bitter in the heat like most other varieties. It will also grow back from the stump, which can be a nice feature.

Looking for something new to do with your lettuce? Consider a wilted lettuce salad which features warm dressing. Some members have been using it in smoothies for its mild flavor. Wash well, coming from the field it is dirty!

SNAP PEAS

EDIBLE POD + SWEET PEAS

Snap peas can be eaten in their entirety. Enjoy 'em whole, just trim the stem. Kids love these raw! We also enjoy peas in stir fry, or chop the pods up and blanch for 30 seconds for use in cold pasta salads, or blanch and freeze for the off-season.

Store as is in your fridge; do not wash before storage as they can become slimy when wet which is indicative of bacteria growth. Instead, wash immediately before eating.



A DELICIOUS EPHEMERAL TREAT GARLIC SCAPES

Scapes are the seed shoots that grow from the bulbs of hard-neck varieties of garlic. When they're young and tender, they look like curly green stalks with tightly closed buds on top. Gardeners harvest them at this time of year so that they won't drain nutrients from the garlic bulbs that will be dug up in a couple of months.

Scapes are an aromatic herb all in one. A popular use for garlic scapes is pesto, either straight-up or mixed with herbs like basil and dill. Pesto showcases raw scapes in all their glory. Scape pesto can be very pungent, but it mellows substantially in the freezer. We like it best in the middle of winter, but it might be one part mellowing and two parts deprivation.

You might also try something as simple as frying them with some olive oil and shrimp, toss them into an omelet or use them as a topping on your pizza. Scapes are very good roasted in oil and salt as well. Store in a bag in the fridge for up to two weeks or more

VITAMIN GREEN

Vitamin green is a variety of non-heading Chinese cabbage closely related to bok choy. Glossy dark green leaves atop slender light green stems are highly nutritious and provide a great source of vitamin C and A. The darker the green the more antioxidants they contain.

With tender, flavorful leaves, Vitamin Greens can be chopped and eaten raw with salad greens or used in oriental salad. They are also excellent if stir-fried with garlic and onion. Store like other greens in plastic in the crisper drawer of the fridge or inside a salad spinner.

A quick note about your **BUTTERHEAD LETTUCE**: this picking is coming out of the field, so you will want to spend a bit more time washing the dirt and hitchhikers from the head. Cut at the base to separate the stem from the leaves. Then use a salad spinner or drip dry before eating and storing.

HAVE A VEGGIE QUESTION?

Don't hesitate to call for help identifying new veggies or asking for tips on how to use. Our farm collective on Facebook is a great place to get prep ideas. Odds are if you've got a question, someone else probably has to same one.

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