

Butterbean Community Farm News

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This week's share:

- baby pac choi and tatsoi
- salad mix
- radishes
- summer squash
- kohlrabi
- parsley
- peas
- fennel
- garlic scapes
- scallions

Field Report

Welcome to Summer! The solstice was last Friday, and not only does that mean that summer's here, but it plays a role in this week's share: scapes.

Garlic produces scapes near the summer solstice. This triggers the plants to stop growing, and start working towards reproduction since the days are only getting shorter. On the solstice, garlic shoots up their flower stalks in order to reproduce via seeds for next year. The farmers and eaters are more interested in the plant's energy concentrating on growing the bulb rather than a flower stalk. So, we harvest the scapes once they've curlicued into a lazy loop, and bulbs will size up nicely in the next four to five weeks. Some may say summer starts on the solstice, but this week's scapes are a sort of agricultural declaration that summer's arrived!

One thing I love about the summer is a good 'ol Midwestern thunderstorm. I say Midwestern, because I forgot that other parts of the world don't get our kinds of extreme weather. We had a good friend in town last week from Oregon, and she was thrilled about the thunder and lightening one night because she couldn't remember the last time she's seen a storm like this.

Thrilled might not exactly be the same emotion that Sarah and I have when a storm warming comes on the radio. A few years ago, while working on another farm, a massive front was coming in and hail was predicted. I said to my boss, "Don't you just love these big summer storms?" I figured out her answer from her worried expression while looking skyward at the gray wall of doom headed towards us. Rain, thunder, lightening? No problem. Wind, hail, and floods seem a little different when you have a perfect stand of salad mix, or you just trellised your tomatoes. I still like a fine storm, but I have a new found appreciation for the gentler rains.

Besides tempestuous weather and garlic scapes, we have more signs of summer produce in this week's share. From summer squash to parsley to scallions, heat seeking produce is soon to become more plentiful. I'm getting pretty hungry thinking about it and looking at these recipes...Eat well this week!

Farmer Dan

Recipes - Dinner and Dessert

Tomato, Fennel, and Italian Sausage Sauce for Pasta or Polenta (a fennel recipe for non-fennel lovers)
adapted from Asparagus to Zucchini

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 – 1 ½ pounds Italian sausage (substitute with white beans for a vegetarian option)
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic (substitute scapes!)
- 1 cup finely chopped fennel
- 2 cans (each 28 ounces) whole peeled tomatoes, pureed, or 7 – 8 cups peeled, chopped fresh tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste (optional)
- ½ cup red wine
- pinch sugar
- red pepper flakes
- salt and pepper
- 1 – 2 tablespoons minced fennel fronds (optional)
- freshly grated parmesan cheese

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium flame. Add Italian sausage and brown. Transfer to a bowl. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large saucepan. Add onion, garlic, and chopped fennel. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are tender. Stir in tomatoes, tomato paste, wine, sugar, and a pinch or two of red pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, 20 – 30 minutes. Add cooked sausage to the sauce. Continue to simmer 30 or more minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in minced fennel leaves just before serving, if desired. Toss with hot, cooked pasta or serve over hot polenta, with Parmesan cheese. Makes 8 – 10 servings.

Zucchini Bars

An heirloom recipe of the Luetzow family, zucchini bars have been my favorite dessert for as long as I can remember. Last year, I froze grated zucchini in bags in 2 cup quantities and then I used it for making zucchini bars in the winter.

Bars:

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine sugar and oil, mix well. Add eggs, beating well. Stir in zucchini. Combine dry ingredients; add to egg mixture, mixing well. Add nuts. Spoon batter into greased and floured 9 x 13 pan. Bake 35-40 min, until toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Cream cheese frosting:

- 3 ounces cream cheese (softened)
- ½ cup butter (softened)
- 1 teaspoon milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups powdered sugar (I often use less sugar and more cream cheese...)

Combine all ingredients. Mix until spreading consistency. Spread over (cooled) zucchini bars.

Use and Storage Tips

Garlic scapes can be used in any situation where you would use garlic. They have a mild garlic flavor and actually keep really well in the fridge in a bag. I feel like they can last easily for a month, and by then we'll have heads of garlic for you. Garlic scape pesto is a popular way to use scapes, which can be made by tossing scapes in a food processor with your nut of choice, parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, and olive oil. You can also stir fry them, sauté them, mince them and use them in salad dressing...

Fennel, like cilantro (same family, *Apiaceae*), has a somewhat polarizing flavor. Some people love it, some people hate it. I'm slightly embarrassed to confess that I fall more into the latter category, but I really like fennel in the kind of recipe included in this week's newsletter: in tomato sauce, served over polenta or noodles. Fennel can be enjoyed shaved thinly and served in a salad, in a sauté with or without other vegetables, quartered and drizzled with olive oil then baked. fennel can be substituted for celery in pretty much any recipe, and the fronds can be substituted for dill.



Dan catching up on *Weeds: Control Without Poison* during last week's CSA pickup



A tempestuous storm during the summer solstice