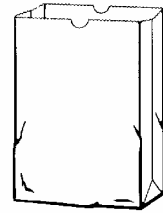
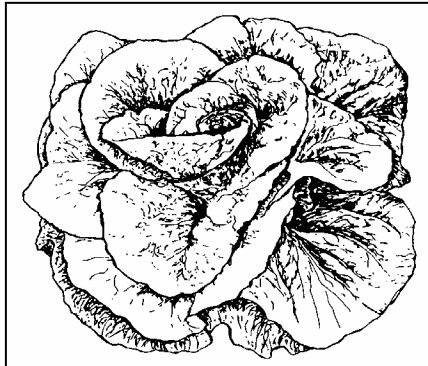


IN THE BAG: robust
Potomac Vegetable Farms
June 14, 2005



Things are ahead of schedule, thanks to the warm weather and near-perfect rainfall, so we have our own snow peas to add to the usual collection of leafy greens.

Leaf lettuce Garlic curls Sugar snap peas Swiss chard
Mei Qing Choi Salad turnips Sorrel Basil Summer Squash Cilantro
Escarole Tatsoi



About Lettuce

The best way to wash lettuce is to break up the head and float it in a sink full of cold water. We have already washed it once in a big sink, and sometimes it's clean enough to eat after one washing, but in general it's best to float it once more. Shake the leaves dry and store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. You are much less likely to waste lettuce if you wash it as soon as you get it, and make it easy to use throughout the week. This advice holds true for all of the greens.

Garlic curls (or "scapes") are the tender flower stalks that grow out of the middle of hardneck garlic, before the garlic below is full grown. We break them off so that the plant can devote its growing energy into the storage bulb and not into making flowers and seeds. The garlic curl season is about three weeks long, so if you like the pesto (see recipe below), you could freeze some in ice cube trays, and store the cubes in a freezer bag to enjoy later in the season.

Sugar Snap peas - Just snap off the stem end and pull down along the length of the pea, removing the strings on both sides. Eat the whole thing, raw or cooked. Sauté in butter or olive oil, with a little salt or soy sauce. Do not overcook - they should be dark green, not grey-green.

Swiss chard is in the spinach family, but it grows all summer (spinach can't take the heat). That's the bunch of large, dark green leaves with a long stem. The crunchy stem is delicious, so don't throw any part of the chard away. The red and yellow stems are rainbow chard, and the one with the broad white stem is called Argentata. They don't taste very different from

each other. The simplest way to prepare Swiss chard is to chop it into 1" pieces and sauté in a hot frying pan with onions and garlic in olive oil. You'll have many opportunities to expand your horizons with chard this year – the plants are thriving.

Sorrel -- Long leaves have intense lemony flavor. Use sparingly in salads or generously in soups and sauces, especially with fish. Don't stir fry it! Best steamed and blended – check your recipes.

Escarole -- Its coarse, mildly bitter and sweet leaves are commonly used in Italian salads. Like other greens, it can be sautéed lightly in garlic and olive oil, seasoned and served as a vegetable with a vinaigrette dressing.

Chinese Cabbage -- Baby bok choy (Mei Qing Choi) is so tender that you need to steam or stir fry it for just a few minutes. You can steam and serve whole the smaller choy or slice vertically to get an attractive cross section. Cut the larger ones into chunks before stir frying.

Salad Turnips -- These perfectly round, white, mild flavored turnips are best eaten raw in salads and sandwiches. You can also steam or roast them or add them to a clear soup.

CILANTRO or Coriander or Chinese Parsley -- Looks like a soft parsley, has a distinctive flavor, used in Asian dishes and Latin salsas. Use soon.

Tatsoi -- Dark green leaves on white stems grow in a beautiful rosette. Add this mild tasting green to your salads or lightly steam or stir fry.

Garlic Curl Pesto

1 bunch garlic curls
¼ cup dry roasted peanuts or walnuts or pine nuts
¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup parmesan cheese

Chop garlic, puree in food processor or blender. Add nuts and puree. Add oil and cheese and puree. Use as a dip, pasta sauce, pizza topping (after thinning with more oil) or on bagels. Also delicious in scrambled eggs! Appropriate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.