

IN THE BAG  
Potomac Vegetable Farms  
June 3, 2009

**Mini shares:** butter lettuce, redleaf lettuce, spinach, radishes, sugar snap peas, dill, garlic curls

**Regular:** butter lettuce, redleaf lettuce, Greenleaf lettuce, spinach, radishes, sugar snap peas, dill, garlic curls, chives, swiss chard

**Every one of these items should be stored in the frig.**

Store greens unwashed in plastic bags in the refrigerator crisper. Any added moisture will cause them to spoil more rapidly. Use within five days, not washing until you are ready to use them. Or, if you have trouble eating lots of salad I suggest washing and spinning it dry all at once, then it's table ready for the rest of the week.

To remove grit from greens (including lettuce), remove the base, float them in a large bowl or sink filled with cold water (simply rinsing under running water won't do it). The dirt will sink to the bottom while the greens rise to the top. Remove the greens by hand, and repeat procedure to make sure all grit and dirt are gone. If using greens raw, cut or tear them to the desired size and spin them in a salad spinner. If cooking, cook them with the water that clings to them.

**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. They are delicious as an ingredient in scrambled eggs (just slice into small bits and sauté them first) or any stir fry or quiche. They are also very tasty when grilled or roasted whole. You'll get more of these next week! They store very well in the frig.

**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.

**Sugar Snap Peas** are a spring wonder! Today was the very first harvest – so we were lucky with the timing. Sugar snaps are also called edible podded peas = you eat the whole thing. These have a string that runs along the seam: remove the stem and pull down "unzipping" the string if you want.

**Dill** is also a harbinger of spring. I love to add it to salad dressings for some zip. My favorite spring salad dressing is made from olive oil, garlic (finely chopped curls will do), vinegar or lemon juice, fresh dill, salt and pepper and some kind of nut butter (I prefer cashew) – put it all in the blender, zizz it up and adjust ingredients to suit your taste. This makes a salad feel more like a meal. Dill also accompanies potatoes nicely.

**Chives** – this is the closest thing to a spring onion we grow. Use them fresh or cooked to get that spicy onion flavor.

### **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.

### **Swiss Chard with Raisins and Pine Nuts**

A great side dish, or you can stuff this into roasted portabella mushrooms, or use it as a pizza topping or a bed for grilled meats. Serves 4.

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

½ cup thinly sliced onion

1 clove garlic, minced (OR 1 chopped garlic scape)

1 bunch Swiss chard, rinsed, coarsely chopped

1/3 cup raisins

¼ cup pine nuts, toasted

1 T. freshly squeezed lemon juice

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Heat 3 T. oil in large skillet, over medium-high heat. Add the onion, stir occasionally until golden. Stir in garlic and cook for one more minute. Add chard in batches, adding more as each batch wilts and kept the pan covered between batches. When all the chard is wilted, stir in raisins, pine nuts, lemon juice and the last tablespoon of olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste.