

North Creek Community Farm NEWSLETTER

Week Three Thursday, June 25, 2015



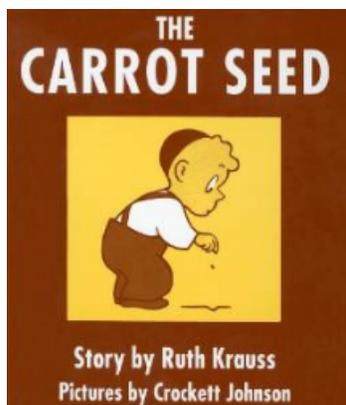
IN THE BAG:

Lettuce
Kohlrabi
Radishes
Green onions
Garlic scapes
Fresh fennel
Chard

Once upon a time...

[The story of how I came to live in Prairie Farm, Wisconsin is familiar to some of you, but others have never heard the tale.]

Once upon a time there was a little girl who was living in the city of Berkeley, but she often thought about farming as if long ago she had been a farmer. She loved books about farming. She tried to grow carrots in the back yard, but couldn't. One day, after riding horses for many years, she decided to learn how to farm with horses with a family that lived in the unknown Midwest.



As soon as the plane circled the green land, she felt as if she had found her next place. She worked for many summers for the family and was adopted as an Auntie. One day she realized that she had to buy a farm in Prairie Farm and has lived there since 1990. Her members have supported her through thick and thin and she is still bringing them vegetables each week.

In the bag:

Lettuce: More head lettuce this week. The temperatures have continued to cool off at night. This makes it easy to sleep and keeps the lettuce crisp and happy.

Chard: This relative of beets is a great excuse to make some African Peanut Stew. For people who have been members for a while, this is a familiar recipe. Try it if you haven't had it before. It's in the notice I sent on Wednesday night. Chard is also delicious sautéed with garlic scapes in some good olive oil.

Fennel: Fresh fennel is a vegetable that many people have never eaten. There are several simple recipes on the back.

Radishes: A few more radishes for the spice lovers out there.

Garlic Scapes If you don't need more at this point, blend them up in a food processor with olive oil for a treat this winter. Freeze in a flattened zip lock bag and then you can break off a chunk as needed.

Kohlrabi look like space Martians but think of them as bulgy broccoli stems and cook accordingly.

Abundance and Drought

It's hard to revel in all the rain knowing that California is in such a severe drought. The stories of farmers losing their trees and crops are heart breaking. When it rains this much, there are too many weeds and its hard to get work done, but that is a small price to pay for all the abundant water. There are predictions that with climate change, the Midwest can expect warmer wetter weather. This certainly is true the last few summers. Weather is not climate and we can only wait and see what is in store in the future.

SIMPLE ROASTED FENNEL

Ingredients

- 2 fennel bulbs (thick base of stalk), stalks cut off, bulbs halved lengthwise, then cut lengthwise in 1-inch thick wedges
- 2 Tbsp (or more) of Olive oil
- 2 teaspoons (or more) balsamic vinegar

Method

1 Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C). Place the fennel wedges in a bowl and toss them with 1 to 2 tablespoons of olive oil, just enough to coat them. Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar, again just enough to coat.

2 Line a roasting pan or baking dish [Silpat](#) or aluminum foil brushed with olive oil. Arrange the fennel wedges on the pan and roast them for 40 minutes or until the fennel wedges are cooked through and beginning to caramelize at the edges.

KOHLRABI HAM BAKE

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp butter
- 4 kohlrabi, peeled and diced
- 8 ounces thick ham, diced
- 2 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- Pinch of mace (can substitute ground nutmeg)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large skillet, melt the butter on medium heat. Add the diced kohlrabi and gently cook for 8 to 10 minutes. **2** Beat the egg yolk, and whisk in the heavy cream, flour, mace, salt and pepper until well combined. **3** Place half of the cooked kohlrabi on the bottom of an ovenproof casserole dish. Layer on the diced ham and parsley. Top with the remaining kohlrabi. Pour the sauce ingredients over the kohlrabi and ham. **4** Bake for 30-35 minutes or until lightly browned on top. Serve immediately.

Buttermilk Fennel Vichyssoise

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 6 green onions, white and light-green parts only, cleaned, and thinly sliced into half-moons
- 1 large white potato, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup chopped fennel bulb plus one handful of fronds, chopped

2 cups buttermilk

Coarse salt and freshly ground white pepper

1/2 cup crème fraîche or sour cream

Smoked salmon & caviar for garnish (optional)

Melt butter in a stockpot over medium-low heat. Add green onions, season with salt, and cook, covered, until tender, about 5 minutes. Add potatoes and stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in fennel (bulb and fronds) and cook for about 10 - 15 more minutes. Working in batches, purée soup in a blender until smooth. Transfer puréed soup to a large bowl. Season with salt and white pepper to taste. Stir in sour cream (or crème fraîche) and buttermilk just before serving. Adjust seasoning as needed. If necessary, thin the soup with a bit more chicken stock or water to achieve desired consistency.

Garnish, if you like, with a sliver of smoked salmon and a tiny drop of caviar. This soup may be served hot or cold.