

# Pinehold Gardens Field Notes

Vol. 25, Week 1

July 3, 2019

## In This Week's Box

- Head lettuce, assorted varieties
- Scallions
- Garlic Scapes
- Snap peas
- Barese Swiss chard
- Herb plants: parsley, oregano, basil & thyme
- Beets with greens

## Coming Up?

- Garlic
- Lettuce
- Fennel
- Carrots
- Summer squash
- Potatoes?

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

It is tradition that I start out the first newsletter with who is all involved in keeping Pinehold going. David and I are both now 63 and the physical labor is taking its toll. We have two part-time employees that each work 8 hours a week. Heather and Alli each have their own small farms but help us one day a week for planting and weeding. Becky helps us with planting, weeding and is now supervising our Tuesday and Thursday worker share crews. A worker share is a CSA member that works four hours a week for the 18-week CSA season in exchange for a box. Their main task is harvesting everything for the CSA, restaurants, and farm stand. Some also pack the boxes, weigh, bag and bunch what was picked in the morning, some help out earlier in the season with planting, and others help with the CSA delivery. All total there are 25 worker shares.

My dad who spent many days helping us out died in December leaving his wife of 68 years living in an assisted living facility. The past nine months have been a rough time for me.

## FIELD NOTES

We are about a month or so behind schedule in planting. That is, by this time, we are usually done planting and are cultivating the crops and keeping some of the areas mowed and under control. We are still planting summer crops and will soon begin planting fall crops with little time to do anything else. Rain has been the big player this spring for us and lots of other farmers. Wet ground not only makes it difficult to create good planting structure but also can wash some nutrients from the soil. So we are adding organically approved minerals and composted and dried poultry manure. The warm weather of late has been helping with the work.

## SATURDAY BERRY U-PICK

This **Saturday** will be a CSA-only member strawberry u-pick. Each membership is allowed two quarts of



strawberries. The time will be from **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** We will have containers.

## SAVE THE BOXES

Save your box and bring it back to your dropsite the following week. In today's box there is an instruction sheet on how to collapse the box. To start, turn the box over and press the tabs of the box inward with your thumbs. **DO NOT PULL UP ON THE TABS** as they will tear.

## STORAGE NOTES

**Strawberries** - Eat fresh, period, preferable at room temperature. But if you want to keep them longer put them in a refrigerator in a covered container.

**All greens** - They need to be put in a plastic bag or they will dehydrate.

**Garlic scapes** - Refrigerate and they will keep for months. Use as you would a green onion or make scape pesto.



The crops have progressed since these photos have been taken a week ago. From upper left, clockwise: garlic, a few weeks from harvest; tomatoes, already sporting nice green ones; peppers, paste tomatoes, eggplant, beets in winter oat crop; and cucumbers lettuce, chard, carrots and beets in another greenhouse.

## Food Tips: Swiss Chard



Swiss chard is a useful and sometimes colorful addition to the greens family. Some varieties are mild

enough to eat raw on a salad but most require some cooking to make them more palatable. A member of the beet family, chard is nutritious with vitamins A, C, E and K and plenty of the minerals potassium iron and calcium. (Source: *Asparagus to Zucchini*, 3rd edition)

**Cooking tips:** As a leafing green with edible stems, always separate the bunch and wash the chard leaves and stems again. We do our best but would rather not deliver a bag of leaves and would rather you enjoy the look the whole bunch.

When cooking, as we said, stems and leaves are edible but cook at much different times. So if using both, start with the stems, chopped as you would like them, and then add the leaves after the stems begin to soften.

Chard pairs well with eggs as in a frittata and also works well in soups and stews. Don't forget to use it the next time you stir.

**Storage:** While chard will keep for several days in the refrigerator, it is best used fresh. Wrap the leaves and stems in a damp cloth and place in a plastic bag. Store in the refrigerator.

Chard leaves can be frozen. Blanch in boiling waters for a few minutes, drain and pat dry and place in a freezer bag.

## Simple Salad Dressing

- 1 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup honey
- 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
- 1 Tbs minced garlic scape
- 1 pinch of salt (optional)
- A little fresh ground pepper (optional)

Mix well until oil and vinegar are combined. Place in a bottle or jar. It will keep days on the counter top. More than a week in the refrigerator.

## Simple Stir Fry

- 2 Tbs. neutral oil like grapeseed or canola , or peanut for flavor
- 1 Tbs garlic scape, minced
- 1 Tbs fresh ginger, minced
- 2 or 3 stalks of chard, chopped
- 1 to 2 cups snap peas or more chard leaves cut into ribbons
- 1/2 cup chopped scallion
- Sauce:
  - 1/4 cup stock
  - 2 Tbs soy sauce
  - 1 tsp sesame oil

Mix the sauce and set aside. In a deep skillet or wok if you have one, heat the oil until it sizzles when you place a drop of water in it. Quickly saute scapes and ginger. Add the chard stalks and stir until barely tender. Add peas and do likewise. Do not overcook. Add scallions and chard leaves toss until leaves are wilted. Add sauce and heat up. Serve over rice. Additions: Meat, which you add before the chard, such beef or chicken. Peanuts which you can add toward the end. Shrimp, which you can add after the chard stems. (Adapted from *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman)

