



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Spring '07 - Week 13 of 13

Planned Harvest

(May differ from actual harvest)

Grapefruit
Red LaSoda Potatoes
Kohlrabi
Bull's Blood / Chioggia Beets
Carrots
Fennel
Swiss Chard

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Kohlrabi Tips

Store kohlrabi, refrigerated and wrapped in plastic, for up to a week.

Simply rinse under cool running water.

The leaves of the kohlrabi are edible but are most often trimmed off and discarded. If cooked, the leaves have a flavor similar to kale.

Kohlrabi can be eaten either raw or cooked.

Kohlrabi should be peeled to remove the fibrous layer just under the skin. It can be peeled after cooking.

Cooking Tips

Peel kohlrabi, cut it into 1/4" slices or sticks and sauté in butter or olive oil, or boil and mash like potatoes.

Kohlrabi, if not served raw, can be cooked like turnip or celery root. It can be prepared as crudités, grated, used in gratins, soups, stews or purées, sautéed or steamed.

THIS WEEK IS THE LAST PICKUP OF THE SESSION

Subscribe to full Summer Session by June 1st

\$221 per produce share. \$30 per goat cheese share.

Reflections

There are days when I can't believe that we are ending our 14th CSA session. Those of us who were there in the CSA's February 2004 beginnings often wonder how we grew from fifteen members to over three hundred. In the early days, the pickup was on Hanes and Maria's front porch on 7th Avenue. The veggies came in individual boxes, one per member, and we never knew ahead of time what would be in the box. We didn't even know the names of many of the vegetables we got.

Those early days were strange and exciting for me. I had never been exposed to so many greens and roots before. I had always been a creative cook, but I had always bought vegetables that I knew from the store, which did not include greens and roots. The CSA propelled my creativity to a new level. And I embraced it.

I started with one share and tried to live off it alone. I quickly started losing weight. After shedding twenty pounds, I decided to buy a second share. My weight stabilized. Two shares ended up being a little too much for me. But I stuck with it and started canning and preparing frozen meals with my extra produce. I also ate out less. And all along, what never ceased to astonish me was that despite my two shares, my food budget was less than half of what it had been before my CSA days.

These days, I do eat out occasionally and I do buy some rice and grains, salt and oil, and other occasional food treats. But about 90% of my food intake consists of CSA food.



Kohlrabi (*Brassica oleracea* Gongylodes Group) is a stout cultivar of the cabbage. The name comes from the German *Kohl* ("cabbage") plus *Rabi* ("turnip"), because the swollen stem resembles the latter. Its origin in nature is the same as that of cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and brussels sprouts: they are all bred from, and the same species as, the wild mustard plant. It was apparently developed in northern Europe shortly before the 16th century. The first description of kohlrabi was by a European botanist in 1554. By the end of the 16th century it was known in Germany, England, Italy (where the Romans called it "Pompeii cabbage"), Spain, Tripoli and the eastern Mediterranean. It is said to have been first grown on a field scale in Ireland in 1734 and in

England in 1837. In the United States, records of its use go back to 1806.

It's a distinctive-looking vegetable with a swollen, nearly spherical, Sputnik-like shape, pale green and purple-tinged, marked by points where the leaf stems were attached.

Recently rediscovered by many chefs, it has gained an enthusiastic new following and is being paired with exotic flavors in many innovative dishes.

The taste and texture of kohlrabi are similar to those of a broccoli stem or cabbage heart, but milder and sweeter, with a higher ratio of flesh to skin. The young stem in particular can be as crisp and juicy as an apple, although much less sweet.

Fish Fillets with Kohlrabi

1 lemon
1 tablespoon sugar
1 fennel bulb, peeled and thinly sliced
4 teaspoons butter
2 fillets of fish (salmon, tuna, mahi-mahi, etc.)
2 cups milk

Remove the zest of a lemon, slice it into very thin strips and place in a small saucepan with the juice of the lemon and the sugar; cook slowly for 15 minutes.

Peel the kohlrabi and slice it as thinly as possible, then cook it gently in a covered pan in butter. At the end of the cooking, add the partly “candied” lemon zest.

Spread the kohlrabi in a deep dish; place on top the fish fillets that have been poached in milk; garnish with finely chopped fennel leaves.

Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

This recipe keeps well for about 72 hours in the refrigerator.

2 large beets
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon oil
salt and pepper to taste
¼ teaspoon cumin
¼ cup feta cheese

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Cut the stem and tip ends off of the beets. Scrub well and wrap in aluminum foil. Place in the oven and roast for 45 minutes. Remove and let cool. (This may be done in advance and the beets placed in the refrigerator overnight.) Remove the leafy ends from the fennel and any stalk that appear too tough. Slice very thinly.

Put the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced fennel and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes. Remove and let cool.

Remove the beets from the aluminum foil. The skins will slip off easily after roasting. After they are skinned, cut into ½-inch cubes.

Mix together the beets, sautéed fennel, salt, black pepper, ground cumin and crumbled feta. Chill well.

Beet Salad

Beets
Salad dressing

Steam beets. Peel them and cut them in cubes. Pack them in a jar. Top with salad dressing. Stores for months in the fridge.



Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) is native to southern Europe and southwestern Asia. It is a highly aromatic perennial herb, erect, grayish or bluish green, and it grows up to 7 ft tall. The finely dissected leaves grow up to 2 ft long. Fennel is widely cultivated for its edible, strongly-

flavored bulbs, leaves and seeds. The flavor is similar to that of licorice though usually not so strong.

The bulb, foliage, and seeds of the fennel plant all have secure places in the culinary traditions of the world. Fennel pollen is the most potent form of fennel, but it is exceedingly expensive. Dried fennel seed is an aromatic, anise-flavored spice; they are brown or green in color when fresh, and slowly turn a dull grey as the seed ages. For cooking, green seeds are optimal.

Many cultures on the Indian subcontinent and in the Middle East incorporate fennel seed into their culinary traditions. It is an essential ingredient in the Bengali/Oriya spice mixture panch phoron and in Chinese five-spice powders. In the west, fennel seed is a very common ingredient in Italian sausages and northern European rye breads.

Many egg, fish, and other dishes employ fresh or dried fennel leaves. One may also blanch and/or marinate the leaves, or cook them in risotto. In all cases, the leaves lend their characteristically mild, anise-like flavor. Fennel bulb is a key ingredient in some Italian and German salads, often tossed with chicory and avocado, or it can be braised and served as a warm side dish.

In medieval times fennel was used in conjunction with St. John's wort to keep away witchcraft and other evil things. This practice may have originated from fennel's use as an insect repellent.

Fennel is thought to be one of the nine herbs held sacred by the Anglo-Saxons. The other eight are not entirely certain, but were probably mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*), wild chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*), and viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*).

Fennel Cooking Tips

Thinly slice raw bulb and incorporate in a salad.

Chop bulb and cook in a tomato sauce.

Steam the bulb, slice it and serve it with a sprinkle of lemon juice and salt, as a side-dish.

Use fennel leaves as you would dill.