

# Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables



The week of July 6, 2009

## This Week - In the Box

**Basil**  
**Broccoli**  
**Cucumber**  
**Green Cabbage**  
**Green Beans** (Jade)  
**Spring Onions** (Ailsa Craig)  
**Potatoes** (Superior white)  
**Lettuce** (Romaine or Red Leaf)  
**Peas** (Tue & Wed)  
**Zucchini** (probably Wed only, this week)  
**Kohlrabi** (maybe)

## Next Week - Likely In the Box

**Broccoli**  
**Green Beans**  
**Potatoes**  
**Carrots**  
**Spring Onions**  
**Cauliflower**  
**Beets or Chard** (maybe)  
**Zucchini** (maybe)  
**Fennel** (maybe)

Please note: This list is only a guess. Weather and other conditions are very unpredictable.

## From the Farm...

This is the time in the season when I am most nervous. We have so many succession plantings and such an incredible variety of produce in the ground ~ all crying out for attention. (The analogy of big families could be carried too far.) Transplanting never seems to end, there are always irrigation woes, deer attacks on the zucchini, foliar feeding to be done, weeding, meetings, weeding, debt management, weeding, beetles in the potatoes, record keeping, tractors to be fixed, Fair Trade certification, questions to be answered, Organic certification, beds to be made, land to find, etc.

But really, the nervousness is about you. How are you doing? Do you understand when we say something *might* be in your box and then it's not? Did you not get peas when your box was on the packing line? Will you even try the Kohlrabi? Will you appreciate that time is running out on the lettuce until Fall? Will you remember to read the newsletter?

I so want you to come to the farm ~ to be connected to your vegetables and the people who grow them, wash them, pack them, and deliver them to you. And I understand that most of you can't come. So please don't hesitate to ask when you wonder why something is the way it is. We want you to know.

The peas in Tuesday's and Wednesday's boxes will mean that everyone should have gotten two weeks of peas. We hope the beans will be around longer. It is truly amazing that we still have the cucumbers from the greenhouse at Zephyr (the "old" farm). This was an experiment (Jack's idea) that worked amazingly well! There will be field cucumbers in a couple of weeks.

Jack can hardly speak when I ask about the zucchini. Last year it was corn and cabbage. So far this year, it's zucchini. Deer is not a suggested topic of discussion. There is a whole other zucchini planting, in a completely different area. (All we can do is hope that the word doesn't get out to you know who.)

Isn't the broccoli spectacular? I love eating it for breakfast ~ just steamed with a bit of butter. My friend Meagan introduced this practice to me when we worked together at Angelic Organics. I think of her and those cool harvest mornings every time.

Enjoy the bounty!

Mary Benson ~ CSA Manager

(The cover photo is from Tara's mom, Vanessa, who worked with us one day last week.)



*Peggy Hanson is a food writer, local food advocate and aspiring food coach who lives in Lanesboro, Minnesota. This column originally appeared in the Fillmore County Journal on July 10, 2006.*

*Peggy welcomes your questions and comments.  
Contact her at [mjhanson50@gmail.com](mailto:mjhanson50@gmail.com).*

## REAL FOOD - Blackcaps

For some people, July 4 means fireworks. Or picnics. Or small town parades and marching bands. For me, July 4 means blackcaps. Blackcaps are what we locals call the ubiquitous wild black raspberries that grow beside many area roads and trails in both field and forest. They are quite seedy, on the small side and have a unique flavor. Once you have acquired a taste for them it is worth the effort to hunt them down and fill a bucket or two.

On July 1 my husband and I came upon a particularly bountiful patch of unusually large berries. Frank returned at dawn the next morning, in the company of an uninitiated young friend of ours. It is never too soon to expose our children to the joys of hunting and gathering. I passed on the picking. I am still getting over a particularly vicious chigger episode. Blackcaps are not all roses. Sometimes a few chiggers are the price you must pay for eating pleasure. No pain, no gain.

Since I got to avoid the chigger risk, I volunteered for the kitchen detail. I have canned tomatoes, peaches, chutney, pickles, jam, applesauce and more. I have always preferred jam to jelly – more texture, less waste. But blackcaps are so very seedy it seemed to me that in this case jelly was the way to go. I confess to being a rank beginner, jelly-wise. I was a little nervous as I studied the Sure-Jell directions. What if my jelly didn't jell? It would be so disappointing. Maybe even a little humiliating for someone who likes to think of herself as culinarily competent. There was a lot on the line.

I set out the necessary equipment: large heavy cooking pot, cone shaped strainer on a stand with a pestle (I got mine for \$2. at a garage sale), another strainer with a fine mesh, potato masher for crushing the berries, two large bowls for the sugar and berry juice, long handled wooden spoon, measuring cups, canning jars, lids and rings, ladle, canning funnel. (My funnel is avocado green plastic and could tell many stories.) Don't let this list of equipment deter you. It is not costly to acquire and this investment will yield a handsome return – even if not as grand, cash wise, as an ethanol share.

I am happy to report that my two batches of berries yielded about 16 cups of tasty jelly. It makes me almost look forward to winter, when we will be able to spoon essence of blackcap upon our homemade buttermilk biscuits. Our own version of July 4 fireworks, when there is snow on the ground..

### **Black Cap Jelly** (Makes about 8 cups ~ adapted from the black raspberry directions in the Sure-Jell box)

4 1/2 cups black cap juice  
6 1/2 cups white sugar  
one box Sure-Jell  
1/4 t. butter, to reduce foaming

To make juice: Place 14 cups of fresh black caps, rinsed and picked over, in a heavy cooking pot. Crush with a potato masher. Add about 3 cups of water. Bring to a boil, turn down heat and simmer gently for about an hour. Ladle berries, a few ladles at a time, into cone shaped strainer, using pestle to press the juice out. Save pressed berries for the compost or the hogs. After all berries have been strained this way, strain again with a fine mesh strainer to remove more seeds. If you don't have quite 4 1/2 cups juice, add just enough water to get 4 1/2 cups.

Add sure jell and butter to juice, bring to a boil over high heat and boil vigorously exactly one minute. Add sugar all at once, bring to a boil again, stirring constantly. Once it comes to a boil, boil exactly one minute. Immediately ladle jelly into prepared jars, and process as directed.



I first must share a bit of inside about the patch of Featherstone's basil in Zephyr Valley. It's magical - magical in the sense that it did something to our spirits whenever we were out picking it for your boxes last year. Our time spent there often found us talking about spirituality, past relationships, or when we decided to stop coloring our hair. There must be some science behind the aroma of basil and its connection to the neurons in the brain, but all I can attest to is the gratitude I have towards it for bringing a few in our crew closer.

Just wanted to let you know that it's no ordinary basil you're eating – it's magical basil.

Ok, back to business. Basil is as versatile to summer dishes as ground hamburger is to Midwestern casseroles. The great thing about basil is that a little goes a long way, and it has the ability to be the star of a dish, or just a complementing flavor. You don't have to be completely smitten with it to use it.

Before Featherstone aroused my senses to real food, basil leaves, in my mind, were dried olive-green, dust-like particles in an unused jar in the cupboard. I'd never had the real stuff. At first, it assaulted my palate with a black licorice taste I was unfamiliar with. (Then I had fennel, which put things into perspective.) But I grew to like it as it was paired with the rest of the bounty through the summer: tomatoes, potatoes, melons, eggplant, berries.

If you're green to basil, I'd begin by adding some chopped basil to your vinaigrette, or whichever salad dressing you use. Roughly tearing up leaves in your salads will give you a less homogenous basil taste, only tasting a few bursts of basil if you prefer that.

Experiment on things in which you would normally throw out immediately, just in case you don't like it, you're not out much. For example, don't throw out your chard stems or beet tops. If you think they lack in flavor after you saute or blanch them (which they don't!), add basil and lemon juice. These are safe starters. (Also, add these raw to your salads!)

One cannot have a decent talk about basil if lemon juice is not involved in the conversation. Lemon juice brings basil (or anything for that matter) to a whole other level. It both heightens the character of the main ingredients and provides an acidic element to dishes. Acid is very important to the outcome of a dish as our palate is structured to pick up this flavor profile. It's also a way to make a dish full of flavor without a lot of fat.

But basil doesn't just belong in the realm of light summer salads and the 'things that leave you hungry' world. A batch of mustard-roasted potatoes recently graced my oven (did I mention I like mustard?) that included basil. Basil adds a light quality to a seemingly heavy dish, and it freshens the taste. Since potato salad season is upon us, why not sprinkle a few chopped leaves into the fold? Basil mayonnaise is the perfect spread for a roasted zucchini sandwich, or something to dip blanched green beans in.



If you're cut from the same I'll-try-anything-once cloth as I am, you may want to consider a few ideas I've found here in Seattle. Recently, a friend made a raspberry tart that included mint and (you guess it) basil. The semi-savory addition of basil was the perfect foil to the sweetness of the berries and lightness of the mint. So, consider the sweet tart.

At the restaurant where I work, the Boat Street Café, fish is a regular on the menu, and the chefs love to dallop basil sauce on their trout after they pour a bit of cream on it and bake it. It's heavenly, but don't go overboard. Too much of it masks the fish taste. Unless that's what you're going for, then dallop away!

Don't limit basil only to what you eat. Add basil leaves to your lemonade! Or combine basil leaves with mint and pour hot water over them for tea. After letting it steep, pull the leaves out and pour the tea in a glass containing ice cubes, lemon juice, and a bit of sugar for a refreshing 'Featherstone iced tea.'

Recently, one of your fellow Featherstone shareholders shared a tip with us about putting up basil by chopping it roughly, placing it in ice cube trays, and covering it with a bit of olive oil for storage in the freezer. This process also works with pesto, and one cube is the perfect amount for most recipes.

As with anything, you'll learn to develop your own taste for basil as you experiment with the plethora of options. My favorite way as of late: plucking a leaf from the potted plant as I walk out the porch, and chewing it like gum! It's immensely satisfying. Tell us your favorite way to use basil! Comments are always welcome at [feucht22@gmail.com](mailto:feucht22@gmail.com)

Delicious days ahead!

# Recipes

## Lemon Garlic BROCCOLI

from [about.com](http://about.com): [southern food](http://southern food)

### Ingredients

3 tablespoon butter  
2 cloves garlic, finely minced  
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
salt, to taste  
pepper, to taste, optional

### Instructions

Steam broccoli until tender but firm, about 5 to 7 minutes. Heat the butter in a heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat; add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the cooked broccoli, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste, cooking briefly to combine. Serves 4.



## Japanese CUCUMBER Salad

from [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)

### Ingredients

2 medium or 1 large cucumber  
1/4 cup rice vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted (see Tip)

### Instructions

Peel cucumbers to leave alternating green stripes. Slice the cucumbers in half lengthwise; scrape the seeds out with a spoon. Using a food processor or sharp knife, cut into very thin slices. Place in a double layer of paper towel and squeeze gently to remove any excess moisture.

Combine vinegar, sugar and salt in a medium bowl, stirring to dissolve. Add the cucumbers and sesame seeds; toss well to combine. Serve immediately.

Tip: To toast sesame seeds, heat a small dry skillet over low heat. Add sesame seeds and stir constantly until golden and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool.



## Chicken with SUGAR SNAP PEAS & Spring Herbs

adapted from [eatingwell.com](http://eatingwell.com)

### Ingredients

1 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1/2 tsp salt  
Freshly ground pepper to taste  
2 tsp plus 1 tablespoon flour, divided  
1 pound thin-sliced chicken breast cutlets  
1 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
8 ounces sugar snap peas, cut in half (2 cups)  
1 14-ounce can quartered artichoke hearts, rinsed  
1/4 cup sprouted beans (see Note), optional  
3 Tbsp minced fresh herbs, such as chives, tarragon or dill  
2 tsp champagne vinegar or white-wine vinegar

### Instructions

Whisk broth, mustard, salt, pepper and 2 teaspoons flour in a small bowl until smooth.

Sprinkle both sides of the chicken with the remaining 1 tablespoon flour. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the chicken in two batches, adjusting heat as necessary to prevent burning, until golden, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer the chicken to a plate; tent with foil to keep warm.

Stir the broth mixture and add to the pan along with snap peas, artichoke hearts and sprouted beans (if using). Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until the snap peas are tender-crisp, 3 to 5 minutes.

Return the chicken to the pan, nestling it into the vegetables, and simmer until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in herbs and vinegar. Serves 4.

Tip: Sprouted beans, not to be confused with bean sprouts, are beans that have just barely sprouted—they look like a bean with a tiny fiber attached (rather than the more fleshy-looking sprouts commonly used in Asian cooking). Eat raw in salads or add to cooked dishes; they're an excellent source of fiber and protein. Look for them in the produce section near other sprouts.

# Green Onions

## Seasonal Cook: Spring onions

from [sfgate.com](http://sfgate.com)

Spring onions are storage onions that are harvested at an immature stage. The allium still has its long green stems, and the onion bulb, which isn't fully developed, ranges from barely bulbous to 2 inches wide.

Not to be confused with the bulb-less green onions, or scallions, spring onions are the same variety as the red, yellow and white onions used by cooks all year-round. Because they are prized by chefs, farmers plant them with the intention of harvesting them early.

With a delicate flavor that's often described as sweet, tender spring onions can be enjoyed both raw and cooked.

**How to store:** Though regular onions can be stored in a cool dry place for several weeks, spring onions are as perishable as any other green vegetable. Wrap in plastic and store in the refrigerator up to five days.

**How to use:** Trim away the root and the dark green part of the stalk; then slice or dice the light green and white portions. James Beard's famous onion sandwich is even better with raw spring onions. The baby alliums also take well to the grill; eat them alongside tacos, grilled vegetables or the summer's first ribs. Barely sauteed, they also make a nice addition to pastas and stir-fries.

**On menus:** Spring onions are a delicate topping for pizzas, such as Beretta's pie with spicy Italian sausage, panna and spring onions; and Pizzaiolo's pizza with anchovy, sorrel and ricotta salata. At Blue Plate in the Mission District, the menu has recently included cornmeal fried spring onions garnishing carpaccio, and a green garlic and spring onion soup.



## Preserving Herbs

From Larisa Walk

Eating the bounty of our region has been a passion of mine for over 30 years, and putting local food on the table all year-round has become an obsession. I've been teaching food drying and other food preservation techniques since 1978, and have written a small book "A Pantry Full of Sunshine" on the subject of energy-efficient ways of accomplishing this task. To see more of what I've been up to, check out [www.GeoPathfinder.com](http://www.GeoPathfinder.com) and go to the Food Preservation page.



I just came in from loading up the solar food dryer with herbs. At this time of year, I'm drying oregano, dill weed, mints, lemon balm, basil, and savory for the winter kitchen. While most herbs are quick and easy to dehydrate, there is one essential ingredient with ephemeral flavors that are lost in the dehydrating process – cilantro.

Cilantro can be put in "suspended animation", awaiting salsa time, by packing in vinegar and setting aside in a cool, dark place (like a refrigerator or root cellar). Simply chop the cilantro, pour a good quality vinegar over it to cover (I like my homemade apple cider vinegar), cap and wait for the tomatoes and peppers to join it! You can use the vinegar in your salsa recipe along with the herb itself.

This method can also be used with dill heads to be used in pickling. It seems like the dill is always ready before the cukes come on, but that's no problem when you do the vinegar pack.

### Rhubarb Farmer

Here is the blurb I just put up on my Lanesboro Local webpage:

Andy Warhol 41 years ago stated "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." He was quite prescient even tho he had no knowledge of such vehicles of fame as the Internet in general and YouTube in particular. My particular "15 minutes of Fame" comes in the form of a 1 minute 33 second YouTube video titled "Rhubarb Farmer". It is an out-take accompanying the documentary film "The Man on the Radio in Red Tennis Shoes" The film aired last night (7.1.09) on PBS' American Masters and replays Sunday at 10:30PM. It has lots of great footage from Lanesboro's 2007 Rhubarb Festival weekend. I hope the out-take is included in the DVD which will be released in a few days and can be ordered from Amazon. Martha Greenwald, whom many of you know, and her husband Randy have brief cameos in "Rhubarb Farmer". They camped overnight at my garden, Oz, and helped me harvest 200# of rhubarb that morning. It was a beautiful morning and a happy time for all of us. A few months later, Martha was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and despite heroic efforts, died this past halloween. I am glad that I had that morning with Martha and Randy and that it was documented so nicely by Peter Rosen and his crew.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mBYU4XsDd8>

Frank Wright

## From the Shareholders...



We've really enjoyed being a part of Featherstone's CSA! Zac and I share a box with our friends Amanda and Liz, and we had them over for supper last week after receiving the week's box. Here are a couple photos from that night; we made some meat and veggie packets for the grill. They were delicious!

I appreciate how Featherstone's CSA program brings people together; not just the growers and the consumers, but it brings friends and neighbors together too.

Amber

## Memory of a Strawberry Social..



Rochester Girl Scouts on a farm visit!



Katie Lemmer, age 5