



HIGH ALTITUDE HARVEST

Community Supported Agriculture

August 6, 2014 —

Thirsty Farms

This week's rainy harvest morning had us doing a happy dance. There's water falling from the sky! We celebrate, even though we know it's a drop in the bucket for our water deficit.

Agriculture soaks up 80% of the water used in our state. It's not a surprise when you think about the fact that California supplies half of the country's veggies, fruits and nuts, plus a bunch of dairy and meat too. Most of the country's heartland grows grains, so the task of producing fresh food for the rest of the nation has fallen on the super-productive mega farms of California's central valley.

Turns out that many of the state's most lucrative agricultural crops are also the most water intensive. Almonds, for instance, have gotten a lot of attention since the drought began. Did you know that it takes 1.1 gallons of water to grow just *one* almond? California farms grow 80% of the world's almonds, using 10% of the state's water supply. Now with the drought in full swing, thirsty almond orchards are threatened and farmers are diverting water away from less water intensive crops - like vegetables - in order to keep their almond investments alive.

Because surface water rights have been cut drastically many farmers are leaning on groundwater for irrigation needs. It's good for the farmers to have a backup source, but bad that groundwater is not yet recognized as a finite resource and managed accordingly. Satellite imagery shows that aquifers are dropping at alarming rates, and

California is still the only Western state that doesn't manage groundwater use. Well drillers saw a boom in business this spring as central valley farmers scrambled to secure new water sources. You can't blame them, but like more straws in a glass of water it's just increasing the rate of depletion.

The trouble is that central valley farms were all grown to monolithic scales during what might turn out to be an unusually wet century. Weather has been tracked in California for the past 165 years, so when you hear that this is the worst drought on record it means that it's the worst since 1849. But natural records like tree rings and sediment tell us that "megadroughts" of 10 to 20 years have been common in the state's history, and also that the past century may have actually been one of the wettest seen in 7,000 years.

So California agriculture - a huge part of the nation's food supply - is made possible by an abundance of water that might not keep flowing. Uh oh.

The good news is that if we keep cultivating a more diversified food-scape, growing at smaller scales in places all over the country, then our country's food system will be at least somewhat more resilient. Will this fix everyone's water problems? No way. This is a simplified view of a crazily complex issue. But in our globalized culture it can feel good to do something that just makes sense. Growing some of our food in our own communities, using mountain water and efficient irrigation, independent of global food system fluctuations — that sounds pretty good to us.

Full Share

- Asian Pears
- Summer Squash
- Spring Mix
- Beets
- Onions
- Sunflower Sprouts
- Parsley
- Cucumbers
- Cabbage
- Blackberries

Half Share

- Asian Pears
- Beets or Carrots
- Summer Squash
- Onions
- Basil
- Cherry Tomatoes

What Grows Where

DAWN GARDENS

cherry tomatoes, blackberries, summer squash, basil, parsley

FIVE FOOT FARM

sunflower sprouts, beets, cabbage, summer squash

GREEN CEDAR FARM

asian pears

GREENVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

lemon and green cucumbers

SIERRA VALLEY FARMS

spring mix

THE STUMP FARM

onions

BLOOMSTONE FARM

beets and carrots

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Bread Share Flavor

Cheesy Seeds

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Beet Pesto

Is this not the most deliciously psychedelic dish you've ever seen? Try it out for a whole new pesto experience. And don't be shy about subbing in other nuts if you don't want to spring for pine nuts. Other recipes call for pistachios, cashews or roasted walnuts.



INGREDIENTS

1 lb red beets (4-5 medium), trimmed and scrubbed	1/4 cup olive oil (I used flaxseed oil)
1 bulb garlic, slice the top off to expose all of the cloves	1/4 tsp salt
1 tbsp fresh dill	1/4 tsp pepper
1/2 cup roasted pine nuts	1 lb whole wheat spaghetti (or any other pasta)
1/3 cup parmesan cheese, grated	

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Drizzle beets and garlic clove with oil. Individually wrap tightly in foil and roast until tender, about 1 hour. Remove from oven, remove foil and let cool. Peel skin off beets with fingers (or a peeler) and coarsely chop. Remove the roasted garlic from the clove. In a food processor combine roasted beets, garlic, oil, pine nuts, and parmesan cheese. Pulse until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain, and return to pot. Toss pasta with the beet mixture. Garnish with pine nuts, parmesan cheese and fresh dill.

Source: wealthofhealth.ca

Crop Updates

Asian Pears — Green Cedar Farm is hooking us up with Asian pears this week! Frank and Sally got them off the tree just before the rainstorm, which is a good thing because they can crack in the rain. These pears can ripen on the counter for a couple of days, but are meant to be eaten when firm.

Blueberries — Unfortunately our tentative predictions last week were true, blueberry season has come to an end. This is why seasonal eating is so great—the berries will be all the sweeter next year because we're left wanting more.

Blackberries — Berry picking season is in full swing at the Dawn Gardens. The intern harvest crew spends hours picking from the wild Himalayan berry vines that skirt the perimeter of the garden. Picking quickly while also managing to not fall into the berry thicket is a valuable skill at the Dawn!

Parsley Ravioli with Brown Butter Sauce

We say it every year, and here it is again: don't dismiss parsley as mere garnish! This ravioli dish is doable because it uses won ton wrappers and will allow you to have a full-fledged parsley experience.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup ricotta cheese
1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
1 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus 1/2 cup leaves
1 large egg
About 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
48 round won ton wrappers (about 9 oz.)
6 tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

1. Make ravioli: Combine cheeses, chopped parsley, egg, 1/2 tsp. salt, and pepper in a medium bowl. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.
2. Lay 8 wrappers on a flat surface and spoon 1 tbsp. cheese mixture onto center of each. Working with 1 wrapper at a time, moisten edge with water and top with another wrapper, pressing to seal tightly. Transfer ravioli to a greased baking sheet, cover, and repeat to make more ravioli.
3. Cook 4 or 5 ravioli at a time in boiling water until dough is tender, for 3 minutes. Transfer to greased baking sheet in a single layer, cover with foil, and keep warm in a 250° oven.
4. Meanwhile, make sauce: Melt butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook, swirling, until light golden, 3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in lemon juice and parsley leaves. Layer ravioli and sauce on a platter.

Source: www.yummly.com