

Week of 12/1/08

Wise Acre Farm

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For more information, and recipes, visit our website:

www.wiseacrefarm.com



Please save your box & jars - I will pick them up next week.

This week on the farm:

Late last week we had two hard freezes here in Arbuckle. This put an immediate end to any of the lingering warm season vegetables and flowers (eggplant, peppers, basil, butternut squash, zinnias and cosmos). The frost also killed off the gourd vines which means I can get out into the gourd field and start harvesting gourds. It feels like winter is really on its way, and rain is in the forecast for the weekend!

The Navel Oranges in your box are early season and a bit tart. They will get much sweeter as the weeks progress. If you really don't like them, let me know and I will replace them for you later when they are sweeter.

Your box contains some or all of the following:

Broccoli, "Cheddar" Cauliflower, Chard, Baby Carrots, Lettuce Mix, Radishes, Navel Oranges, Red Potatoes (from another farm), Fresh Cut Greens and Flowers.

CHARD

Chard is a staple of Mediterranean cuisines and it is really two vegetables in one: both the leaves and the stems are completely edible and can be used separately to create entirely different dishes.

Chard is one of the most versatile vegetables you'll encounter. Young leaves can be cut into a thin chiffonade and added raw to salads, contributing color, texture, and an earthy nuance of flavor. In some parts of the world, chard is a substitute for spinach. Although not related botanically, chard leaves do resemble spinach and can be used in any spinach recipe, adding a slightly more robust taste and texture to the dish. Chard leaves also can be steamed, sautéed, braised, blanched and used as wrappers for meat or grain stuffings, or to encase fish fillets.

As a general rule, chard stalks that are wider than 1 inch are best cooked separately from the leaves. Alternately, you can cook the stems until they're almost tender before adding the leaves, to avoid overcooking the greens. Stalks can be sliced and added to stir-fries, pastas, stuffings, and soups. In Mediterranean cuisine, the stems are often braised in stock, or sautéed with olive oil and garlic. They're also widely used in stews, gratins, tians, tarts, and tortas.

IDEAS FOR CHARD

from Maraquita Farm

- Sauté chard with garlic in olive oil. Put a cover on the pan and allow chard to steam for about 5 minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and, if desired, some hot pepper flakes before serving.
- Blanch the leaves and add to soup. Try substituting chard for spinach or arugula in soup recipes.
- Make a gratin with the stems: Boil the stems until tender (about 30 minutes). Put them in a gratin dish, add seasonings (such as a little garlic and parsley), top with a bechamel sauce and cook under broiler until golden brown.
- Blanch the whole leaves and stuff them with meat or vegetable fillings.