



Cal Poly Organic Farm

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

www.calpolyorgfarm.com

CPOF ANNOUNCEMENTS

* **Memorial Day is next week, Monday, May 26!** CSA members who normally pick-up their veggies on Monday will instead get their boxes on Tuesday, the 27th. Thursday pick-ups will be unchanged.

* **CAL POLY ORGANIC FARM SUMMER CSA STARTS SOON!** Just a reminder... The Cal Poly Organic Farm Summer CSA will have both 10- and 14-week shares available beginning the week of June 16th. Sign up forms can be found at our website, located at www.calpolyorgfarm.com. Sign up now to continue receiving beautiful, organic produce all summer long.

For those of you who signed up for the 24-week CSA season and opted for the payment plan, your second payment will be due no later than June 30, 2008. If you have any questions regarding your membership status or the balance you owe, please call the Cal Poly Organic Farm at 756-6139.

* **Greetings from the Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium at Cal Poly!** With best wishes for the rest of May and the coming summer months... and hoping to see you at some of the following exciting local offerings! For more information call Hunter Francis, Program Associate, at (805)756-5086 or go to www.sarc.calpoly.edu.

• **VINEYARD TEAM Small Farm Equipment Demo:** Thursday, May 29, 9-11:30 am. Pomar Junction Vineyard, 5036 South El Pomar Road, Templeton, CA. Fee: \$20 for all non-CCVT members. Free for all members. This tailgate will feature vineyard equipment that is not only efficient, but cost effective. Ask specific questions, watch the equipment work, and compare side-by-side the latest and greatest tools that can be used in your vineyard. Join a BBQ lunch after the demonstrations. 3 Ag Waiver & 3 PCA/PA hours applied for. For details see: www.vineyardteam.org/calendar/calendar.php?mode=view&id=77

• **Registration Now Open for SUSTAINABILITY Conference at Cal Poly!**

The seventh Annual UC/CSU/CCC Sustainability Conference at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, July 31st-August 3rd. The UC/CSU/CCC Sustainability Conference was established in 2001 for the exchange of best practices between people engaged in or seeking to learn more about campus sustainability covering the spectrum from teaching and academic research to all aspects of campus operations. This year's conference seeks to highlight successful examples of projects implemented in the following areas: Curriculum and Research / Energy / Food Systems / Green Building / Institutionalizing Sustainability / Procurement and Sustainable Business Practices / Transportation / Waste Reduction and Recycling / Water, Agriculture and Landscaping. DEADLINE: Please

Week 7 Produce

May 18 – May 24, 2008

Full Shares expect 10-12 items

Small Shares expect 8-10 items

from the following list:

Head lettuce – Add to your favorite salads!

Carrots - Carrots belong to the Umbelliferae family along with parsnips, fennel caraway, cumin and dill which all have the umbrella-like flower clusters that characterize this family of plants.

Bunched onions - The word onion comes from the Latin word unio for "single," or "one," because the onion plant produces a single bulb.

Fennel - Healthy sautéed fennel and onions make a wonderful side dish.

Napa or Green cabbage - Cabbage is an excellent source of vitamin C.

Spinach - Calorie for calorie, leafy green vegetables like spinach provide more nutrients than any other food.

Leeks – Fresh leeks should be stored unwashed and untrimmed in the refrigerator, where they will keep fresh for between one and two weeks.

Sugar Snap Peas (TKP Farms) – Peas are a sure sign that Spring has arrived.

Broccoli (Boni-Pak) – Broccoli was introduced to the United States in colonial times, popularized by Italian immigrants who brought this prized vegetable with them to the New World.

Strawberries (A&A Farms) - Unwashed and unhulled strawberries will keep in the refrigerator for one or two days in their original container or spread-out on a plate covered with a paper towel, then cover with plastic wrap.

Unless otherwise noted, all vegetables are certified organic.

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register by MAY 30th in order to get the early bird discounts. Student scholarships available. For more information, visit <http://sustainability.calpoly.edu>

- **Understanding BIODYNAMIC Agriculture:** The SARC is pleased to cosponsor 'Understanding Biodynamic Agriculture: Principles and Practice' with Cal Poly's Continuing Education (CE) Dept. Biodynamics is one of the oldest forms of organic farming, dating back to the 1920s. Course includes hands-on demonstrations of springtime biodynamic preparations. This class is tailored to professional farmers and home gardeners alike. Taught by Cal Poly alumna, Gena Nonini, owner of Marian Farms in Fresno (www.marianfarmsbiodynamic.com). June 5-6, Fri. 7:00 - 9:00 pm & Sat. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Registration: \$135. More information can be found at: <http://continuing-ed.calpoly.edu/wine.html>
- **THE HISTORY OF THE FARMERS ALLIANCE in SLO County:** The Farmers Alliance was a national agrarian political and economic movement from the 1890s. Frustrated by unfair costs of land, milling, and transportation, many SLO County farmers aligned with Populist Party to start their own economic co-ops. ON NOW! San Luis Obispo County Historical Museum open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. 696 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo (Across Broad Street from the Mission) Special: Exhibit Walk-through with Chico State History Professor, Michael Magliari, to be held on June 7. Phone: (805) 543-0638 • www.slochs.org
- **EUCALYPTUS TALK** at Botanical Garden: June 14 at 1pm. Cal Poly Biology Professor Matt Ritter presents "The Eucalyptus - the most common non-native trees in California". Held in the Education Center. Fee: \$5 (Members \$4). Info: call 541-1400 or visit www.slobg.org.
- **SLOW FOOD NATION to be held in San Francisco:** Over Labor Day Weekend (August 29 to September 1, 2008), Slow Food Nation will transform San Francisco's Civic Center and Fort Mason as tens of thousands of local citizens and visitors, farmers and food artisans, political leaders, environmental advocates and health-care experts, educators and artists, and parents and children gather to experience the largest celebration of food San Francisco has ever witnessed. The first-ever event of its kind in America, Slow Food Nation will present an extraordinary range of activities for all ages, including a farmers' market showcasing hundreds of California growers and artisan producers, tastings and feasts, chef's demonstrations, an urban farm, a music festival, a major conference on food values, social justice and the environment, and workshops, forums, films and interactive exhibits, all highlighting food that supports an agricultural system that is good, clean and fair. Visit: www.slowfoodnation.org
- **SAVE THE DATE!** The SARC's fourth annual fundraiser dinner will be held on Thursday, October 2nd. This year, we are proud to host one of 'Cal Poly's Own', Tim LaSalle, now CEO of the Rodale Institute (www.rodaleinstitute.org), America's leader in organic agricultural research. As always, the event will be a memorable showcase of some of the Central Coast's finest farms, vineyards and chefs. (Details to follow. For previous events, see: www.sarc.calpoly.edu/events/fundraisers.html).

May 16, 2008

Dear CSA Members,

I want to thank you for supporting organic and sustainable agricultural education at Cal Poly. Without your participation in the CSA we would not be able to provide education and work experience for over 100 Cal Poly students and over 50 community members (many K-6th graders) per week. First and foremost this farm's mission is to educate environmentally sound farming and gardening practices and to produce the next generation of agriculturists. We are excited that sustainable agriculture is now a minor at Cal Poly!

Community Supported Ag (CSA) programs feature produce grown in season and are a way that you can directly support local growers. CSA's inspire you to cook with new varieties of fruits and vegetables and to eat more vegetables. Buying locally reduces the miles your food travels to get to your plate. Furthermore, Cal Poly's CSA gives you a chance to encourage and meet the next generation of innovative farmers working at the farm.

As we move into longer summer afternoons, we hope to see you and your loved ones at the farm! Sincerely, Cindy Douglas, CPOF Manager & new mom, ckdougl@calpoly.edu, 756 6139

VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: FENNEL (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

Ever since ancient times, fennel has enjoyed a rich history. The ancient Greeks knew fennel by the name "marathon"; it grew in the field in which one of the great ancient battles was fought and which was subsequently named the Battle of Marathon after this revered plant. Fennel was also awarded to Pheidippides, the runner who delivered the news of the Persian invasion to Sparta. Greek myths also hold that knowledge was delivered to man by the gods at Olympus in a fennel stalk filled with coal. Fennel was revered by the Greeks and the Romans for its medicinal and culinary properties.



Fennel is composed of a white or pale green bulb from which closely superimposed stalks are arranged. The stalks are topped with feathery green leaves near which flowers grow and produce fennel seeds. The bulb, stalk, leaves and seeds are all edible. Fennel belongs to the *Umbelliferae* family and is therefore closely related to parsley, carrots, dill and coriander. Fennel's aromatic taste is unique, strikingly reminiscent of licorice and anise, so much so that fennel is often mistakenly referred to as anise in the marketplace. Fennel's texture is similar to that of celery, having a crunchy and striated texture.

Selection and Storage

Good quality fennel will have bulbs that are clean, firm and solid, without signs of splitting, bruising or spotting. The bulbs should be whitish or pale green in color. The stalks should be relatively straight and closely superimposed around the bulb and should not splay out to the sides too much. Both the stalks and the leaves should be green in color. There should be no signs of flowering buds as this indicates that the vegetable is past maturity. Fresh fennel should have a fragrant aroma, smelling subtly of licorice or anise. Fennel is usually available from autumn through early spring.

Store fresh fennel in the refrigerator crisper, where it should keep fresh for about four days. Yet, it is best to consume fennel soon after purchase since as it ages, it tends to gradually lose its flavor. While fresh fennel can be frozen after first being blanched, it seems to lose much of its flavor during this process. Dried fennel seeds should be stored in an airtight container in a cool and dry location where they will keep for about six months. Storing fennel seeds in the refrigerator will help to keep them fresher longer.

Nutrition

The most fascinating phytonutrient compound in fennel may be *anethole*—the primary component of its volatile oil. In animal studies, the *anethole* in fennel has repeatedly been shown to reduce inflammation and to help prevent the occurrence of cancer. In addition to its unusual phytonutrients, fennel bulb is an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is the body's primary water-soluble antioxidant, able to neutralize free radicals in all aqueous environments of the body. The vitamin C found in fennel bulb is directly antimicrobial and is also needed for the proper function of the immune system. As a very good source of fiber, fennel bulb may help to reduce elevated cholesterol levels. And since fiber also removes potentially carcinogenic toxins from the colon, fennel bulb may also be useful in preventing colon cancer. In addition to its fiber, fennel is a very good source of folate, a B vitamin that is necessary for the conversion of a dangerous molecule called *homocysteine* into other, benign molecules. At high levels, homocysteine, which can directly damage blood vessel walls, is considered a significant risk factor for heart attack or stroke. Fennel is also a very good source of potassium, a mineral that helps lower high blood pressure, another risk factor for stroke and heart attack. In a cup of fennel, you'll receive 10.8% of the daily value for fiber, 5.9% of the DV for folate, and 10.3% of the DV for potassium.

Preparation Tips

The three different parts of fennel—the base, stalks and leaves—can all be used in cooking. Cut the stalks away from the bulb at the place where they meet. If you are not going to be using the intact bulb in a recipe, then first cut it in half, remove the base, and then rinse it with water before proceeding to cut it further. Fennel can be cut in a variety of sizes and shapes, depending upon the recipe and your personal preference. The best way to slice it is to do so vertically through the bulb. If your recipe requires chunked, diced or julienned fennel, it is best to first remove the harder core that resides in the center before cutting it. The stalks of the fennel can be used for soups, stocks and stews, while the leaves can be used as an herb seasoning.

A Few Quick Serving Ideas:

- Combine sliced fennel with avocados, and oranges for a delightful salad.
- Braised fennel is a wonderful complement to scallops.
- Next time you are looking for a new way to adorn your sandwiches, consider adding sliced fennel in addition to the traditional toppings of lettuce and tomato.
- Top thinly sliced fennel with plain yogurt and mint leaves.

Fennel Mashed Potatoes

2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter
1 fennel bulb, trimmed, quartered, cored, thinly sliced crosswise
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds, crushed
2 1/2 pounds russet potatoes or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 cup (or more) half and half



1. Melt butter in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add sliced fennel bulb and crushed fennel seeds and stir to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until fennel is tender but not brown, stirring often, about 20 minutes. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.)
2. Place potatoes in large saucepan. Cover with cold water and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and boil until potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Drain. Return potatoes to pan; cook over medium heat until no liquid remains. Mash potatoes.
3. Add 1 cup half and half to fennel mixture and bring to simmer. Working in 2 batches, add fennel mixture to potatoes; stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Rewarm over medium heat, adding more half and half as needed if dry.) *Serves 6.*

Braised Fennel

2 fennel bulbs with fronds
1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
1/4 cup water

1. Cut off and discard stalks from fennel bulbs, reserving fronds. Chop 1 tablespoon fronds and discard remainder. Cut bulbs lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick slices, leaving core intact.
2. Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then brown fennel slices well, turning over once, 3 to 4 minutes total.
3. Reduce heat to low. Sprinkle fennel with salt and pepper, then add broth and water. Cook, covered, until fennel is tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Sprinkle with fennel fronds. *Makes 4 servings.*

Fennel and Apple Salad with Cider Vinaigrette

1/2 cup unfiltered apple cider or apple juice
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1 large Granny Smith apple, quartered, cored, thinly sliced
1 medium-size fresh fennel bulb, trimmed, thinly sliced
2 cups arugula (about 3 ounces)
1/2 cup pecans (about 2 ounces), toasted

Whisk first four ingredients in medium bowl to blend; season dressing with salt and pepper. Combine apple, fennel and arugula in large bowl. Toss with enough dressing to coat. Mound salad on 4 plates; sprinkle with pecans. *Serves 4.*

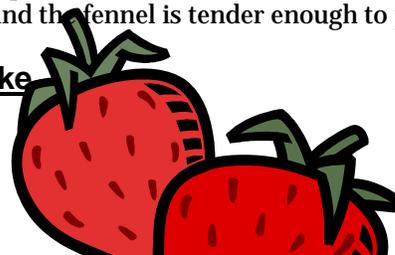
Baked Fennel with Parmesan

2 fennel bulbs
1 tablespoon butter
3/4 cup half-and-half cream
3/4 cup crème fraîche
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Cut the base off of the fennel bulbs, and cut a cone shape into the base to remove the core. You can see the core because it is whiter than the surrounding green. This is optional, but helps the fennel cook faster. Slice the fennel vertically (upright) into 1/4 inch thick slices.
2. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the fennel, and fry for about 5 minutes. Stir in the half-and-half and crème fraîche until well blended. Transfer to a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the top.
3. Bake for 30 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the top is golden brown and the fennel is tender enough to pierce with a fork. *4 serving*

Old-Fashioned Strawberry Shortcake

Biscuits:
2 cups all-purpose flour



1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons sugar
1 stick butter, chilled
2/3 to 3/4 cup half and half, milk, or cream

Filling:

1 quart strawberries
1/3 cup sugar

1 1/2 cups whipping cream for topping, or non-dairy whipped topping

1. Rinse the berries under cold water; drain well. Hull and slice the berries; place in a bowl. Sprinkle with the sugar; cover and let stand at room temperature for about 1 hour. Whip the cream (sweeten with 2 or 3 tablespoons of sugar, if desired) until it holds a soft peak. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
2. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Set rack at center level.
3. In a food processor (you can use a pastry cutter or fingertips) combine the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar and pulse to mix. Cut butter into about 8 pieces and add to the mixture. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal, but with few pea-size chunks of butter left in the mixture. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and make a well in the center. With a fork stir in the cream or milk, just until dough is moist. Be very careful not to overwork. The dough doesn't have to hold together well at this point. Let the dough stand for a minute. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Fold the dough over on itself (knead) 2 or 3 times, until it is holding together and is less sticky.
4. Gently pat the dough into a 6 by 12-inch rectangle about 3/4-inch thick and cut into 8 (3-inch) biscuits with a floured round cutter. Transfer to a buttered foil-lined cookie sheet. Brush on a little milk or cream and sprinkle tops with some sugar, if desired. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until risen and golden brown.
5. Remove to a platter and split each biscuit horizontally with a serrated knife. Butter the hot biscuits then top with about 1/3 cup of berry mixture. Replace the tops and top with a tablespoon or so of berries. Serve with whipped cream for topping. *Serves 8.*

Strawberry Rhubarb Pie

2 cups diced rhubarb
1 1/2 to 2 cups fresh strawberries, cleaned and sliced
1 to 1 1/4 cups sugar
2 tablespoons flour
pastry for 8 or 9-inch 2-crust pie

Combine rhubarb, strawberries, sugar, and flour in pastry lined pie plate. Cover with pastry and seal edges; flute edge all around and vent top. Bake at 400° for 30 to 40 minutes, until fruit is tender and crust is browned.

Vichyssoise

4 cups sliced leeks, white part only
4 cups diced potatoes, old or baking potatoes recommended
6 to 7 cups water
1-1/2 to 2 teaspoons salt or to taste
1/2 cup or more sour cream, heavy cream, or crème fraîche, optional
1 tablespoon fresh chives or parsley, minced

1. Simmering the soup. Bring the leeks, potatoes and water to the boil in the saucepan. Salt lightly, cover partially, and simmer 20-30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Purée the soup if you wish. Taste and correct seasoning.
2. After chilling the soup, you may wish to stir in a little more cream. Taste carefully again, and correct the seasoning. Top each serving with a sprinkle of chives or parsley. *Yield: 6 to 8 servings, about 2 1/2 quarts.*