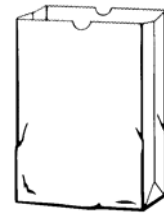


IN THE BAG
Potomac Vegetable Farms
June 5, 2008



Mini shares: garlic curls, sweet onion or snap peas, lettuce mix or cabbage rolls, lettuce, spring onions or cilantro or dandelion greens, lettuce mix

Regular: garlic curls, sweet onion, endive or snap peas, lettuce, salad turnips, green garlic

Robust: garlic curls, salad turnips, Chinese cabbage, sweet onions, endive, parsley, chard, lettuce, green garlic, snap peas, Swiss chard, etc.

The Bok Choy and sweet onions come from our friends at Next Step Produce in Newburg, Maryland. They are certified organic, and the growing season down there is about two weeks ahead of ours.

Here are some explanations and descriptions of some of the items you might find in your bag this week. You may not find all of these today, but eventually you will. In a separate attachment, we are sending an image file with pictures of greens you may receive this season, to help you to identify them. More recipes and vegetable identification help at www.potomacvegetablefarms.com.



About Lettuce

The best way to wash lettuce is to break up the head and float it in a sink full of cold water. We have already washed it once in a big sink, and sometimes it's clean enough to eat after one washing, but in general it's best to float it once more. Shake the leaves dry and store them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. You are much less likely to waste lettuce if you wash it as soon as you get it, and make it easy to use throughout the week.

How to clean and store your greens

Store greens unwashed in plastic bags in the refrigerator crisper. Any added moisture will cause them to spoil more rapidly. Use within five days, not washing until you are ready to use them.

To remove grit from greens, dunk them in a large bowl or sink filled with cold water (simply rinsing under running water won't do it). The dirt will sink to the bottom while the greens rise to the top. Remove the greens by hand, and repeat procedure to make sure all grit and dirt are gone. If using greens raw, cut or tear them to the desired size and spin them in a salad spinner. If cooking, cook them with the water that clings to them.

Garlic curls (or "scapes") are the tender flower stalks that grow out of the middle of hardneck garlic, before the garlic below is full grown. We break them off so that the plant can devote its growing energy into the storage bulb and not into making flowers and seeds. The garlic curl season is about three weeks long, so if you like the pesto (see recipe below), you could freeze some in ice cube trays, and store the cubes in a freezer bag to enjoy later in the season. They are delicious as an ingredient

in scrambled eggs (just slice into small bits and sauté them first) or any stir fry or quiche. They are also very tasty when grilled or roasted whole.

Swiss chard is in the spinach family, but it grows all summer (spinach can't take the heat). That's the bunch of large, dark green leaves with a long stem. The crunchy stem is delicious, so don't throw any part of the chard away. The red and yellow stems are rainbow chard, and the one with the broad white stem is called Argentata. They don't taste very different from each other. The simplest way to prepare Swiss chard is to chop it into 1" pieces and sauté in a hot frying pan with onions and garlic in olive oil. You'll have many opportunities to expand your horizons with chard this year – the plants are thriving.

Salad Turnips -- These perfectly round, white, mild turnips are best eaten raw in salads and sandwiches. You can also steam or roast them or add them to a clear soup.

Cabbage rolls -- These are the beautiful outside leaves of cabbage plants; eat them like collards. Just cut up small and fry in olive oil with onions or chopped garlic curls and salt. Cook completely.

Endive -- Also called "frisee." It looks like lettuce but it's very frizzy and you eat it like escarole. Much stronger flavored than lettuce and not really suitable as a solo salad ingredient.

Bok Choy -- so tender that you need to steam or stir fry it for just a few minutes. You can steam and serve whole the smaller choy or slice vertically to get an attractive cross section. Cut the larger ones into chunks before stir frying.

Cilantro or Coriander or Chinese Parsley -- Looks like a soft parsley, has a distinctive flavor, used in Asian dishes and Latin salsas. Use soon.

Green Garlic -- immature garlic to be used like leeks. All the soft parts are edible: the bulb, the stem, the scape. The New York Times Magazine recently ran an article all about the glories of green garlic:

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0DE3DF103EF93BA25756C0A96E9C8B63&scp=1&sq=garlic+defanged&st=nyt>

Garlic Curl Pesto

1 bunch garlic curls

¼ cup dry roasted peanuts or walnuts or pine nuts

¼ cup olive oil

¼ cup parmesan cheese

Chop garlic, puree in food processor or blender. Add nuts and puree. Add oil and cheese and puree. Use as a dip, pasta sauce, pizza topping (after thinning with more oil) or on bagels. Also delicious in scrambled eggs! Appropriate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.