

Hi all!

First and foremost, welcome! We're so happy to begin our 14th season with you! Please take a look at PVF's attached newsletter, *Farm Notes*.

Spring is about greens, and so the timing of last week's *New York Times* article, "[Breeding the Nutrition Out of Our Food](#)" was perfect. The story focuses on the loss of phytonutrients in our current mainstream food supply. [Phytonutrients](#) are plant chemicals that help protect plants from germs, fungi, bugs, and other threats. Eating these compounds has the potential to reduce cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia.

There are two common themes in the history of nutrient loss: Our farming ancestors have chosen the least bitter plants to grow in their gardens, when many of the most beneficial phytonutrients have a bitter, sour, or astringent taste; and many early farmers favored plants that were low in fiber and high in sugar, starch and oil because they were tastier to eat, and also to fuel their strenuous lives. These yummier, sweeter plants have gotten far away from their once-wild, nutrient-dense counterparts and lost their nutritional integrity in the process.

Recommendations to recoup the losses:

- Eat your bitter greens! Aurgula, dandelion greens, collards, kale, mustards and turnip greens are all packed with phytonutrients.
- Scallions and green onions have more than five times the phytonutrients of their common onion counterparts. The green portions are the most nutritious.
- Herbs! Parsley is a powerhouse in modest form. Add it to everything you can!

In The Bag **Week 1: June 4, 2013** **Featuring: Lettuce**

Here is a list of what you may find in your bag this week. Things change from day to day, so sometimes what's on our list is not exactly what you get. Don't be alarmed!

Mini: garlic curls, kohlrabi, Hakurei turnips, lettuce, parsley, baby fennel, cabbage

Regular: garlic curls, Swiss chard, lettuce, escarole, oregano/dill, cilantro, scallions, red frilly mustard greens, sweet potatoes from Next Step Produce

Robust: garlic curls, Swiss chard, kohlrabi, lettuce, broccoli raab, escarole, radishes, cilantro, scallions, sweet potatoes, cabbage

If you have trouble figuring out what you brought home, go ahead and refer to our [ID That Veggie](#) section of the website. We try to keep it updated with what's available to you.

Broccoli Raab, also called Rapini, has spiked leaves that surround clusters of

green buds resembling small heads of broccoli. Small, edible yellow flowers may be blooming among the buds. Although it has broccoli's name, broccoli raab is not related to broccoli; it's closely related to turnips. (You'll notice the leaves resemble turnip greens.) Cook the whole plant—the stems can be removed up to where the leaves begin, and sautéed before adding the leaves to the pan. Broccoli Raab is a source of vitamins A, C, and K, as well as potassium, calcium, and iron.

Cabbage, in the Brassica family, seems to have a bad reputation. No one knows what to do with cabbage (aside from corned beef and cabbage or sauerkraut, that is). With such a longstanding history as a staple throughout the world, there is plenty to do with this gem. Its sweetness is enhanced by quick-cooking methods like stir frying or light steaming. It can also be cooked longer in soups and stews and give a richness to the broth. It keeps very well in the refrigerator or the root cellar and is an excellent source of vitamins K and C, and high in dietary fiber, manganese, folate, and vitamin B6. Scientists have also found that a certain component of the cruciferous vegetable family, sulforaphane, helps stimulate enzymes that guard against the development of cancerous tumors (Greens Glorious Greens, Johnna Albi and Catherine Walthers, page 59).

Escarole is in the chicory family. It is rich in many vitamins and minerals including folate and vitamins A and K, and they are high in fiber. Escarole grows in a large head, like lettuce. It has wider, pale stems and broad, dark green leaves. The outside leaves of an endive head are can be bitter. The inner leaves are light green to creamy-white and milder flavored. It can be eaten like other greens, sautéed, chopped into soups and stews, or as part of a green salad.

Fennel is commonly associated with Mediterranean cooking. Both the bulbs and the feathery fronds can be eaten raw and cooked. It has a slightly sweet, crunchy, anise or licorice flavor. It's high in vitamin C, fiber, potassium, and manganese. Try it raw in salads, or paired with fish to bring out the fish flavors. Use it in a stew to add a new depth to the flavors, or whiz some up with your favorite oil and vinegar for a zippy dressing.

Garlic Curls (or “scapes”) are the tender flower stalks that grow out of the middle of hardneck garlic before the garlic bulb below is fully grown. We break them off so that the plant can devote its growing energy to the storage bulb and not to making flowers and seeds. The garlic curl season is about three weeks long, so if you like the pesto recipe we attached, 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.

Hakurei Turnips are a small, white, gourmet variety of turnips, popular in Japan. They are tender and sweeter than most varieties so can be enjoyed raw. You

may also use them in stir fries, soups or with other baked root veggies. Remember to eat the greens!

Kohlrabi, a stout member of the cabbage family, has a flavor reminiscent of broccoli stems or cabbage hearts, but slightly sweeter. It can be eaten raw, as a nice slaw, a crunchy and juicy addition to your salad, or sliced thin on sandwiches. Be sure to peel your kohlrabi—the outer skin is very tough.

Mustard Greens: Another very healthy green (surprise!), mustard greens pack a whallop with lots of vitamins A, C, and E as well as folate. Mustards are considered a herb, and are the greens that produce the seeds used to make dijon mustard. Expect a strong, peppery flavor. Young greens can be added to salads or sauté them like you would any other dark leafy green.

Sweet Potatoes are large, starchy, sweet tasting, tuberous root vegetables that are actually only distantly related to the potato family. They are in the Convolvulaceae family, whose other member, the morning glory, we fight in the fields as a very successful weed. They are high in complex carbohydrates, vitamins A, C and B6, manganese, dietary fiber, and potassium. They're also high in antioxidants. Sweet potatoes can be baked, roasted, pureed, and used in soups. Personally, I like them cubed, tossed with olive oil and chili powder, and roasted in the oven until just starting to crisp. Sweet and spicy... Yum!

Swiss Chard is a leafy green belonging to the same family as beets and spinach. The flavor is of a robust, slightly salty spinach. To cook, slice up the stems, throw them in the sauté pan first, and then add the leaves. Chard is ridiculously good for you, high in vitamins and minerals like vitamin K, vitamin A, vitamin C, magnesium, manganese, potassium, iron, vitamin E, dietary fiber, calcium, vitamin B2, vitamin B6, protein, vitamin B1, zinc, folate, and niacin. Use it as a side dish, sauté with mushrooms, have it instead of spinach on pizza, mix it in with your eggs... the possibilities are endless.

Featuring: Lettuce

It is full-on lettuce season. Leaf lettuces (not iceberg) are an [excellent source](#) of vitamins A, K, C, and B-complex, beta carotene, and folate. They also contain good amounts of iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium. Regular inclusion of lettuce in salads is known to prevent osteoporosis, iron-deficiency anemia, and believed to protect from cardiovascular diseases, ARMD, Alzheimer's disease, and cancers.

Store lettuce and salad greens in a plastic bag, not tightly closed, in the crisper drawer. Try to wash them just before using. We recommend soaking lettuce in a sink of cold water. The dirt will sink while the leaves rise to the top. For heads of lettuce, twist or cut off the stem and separate the leaves before washing. Fill the sink or a large bowl with cold water. Plunge in the leaves and swish them around.

Lift the leaves out of the water to a colander and check the bottom of the sink or bowl. If there is any sand or grit, discard the water and repeat the process.

Recipes

Salads will be in season for a while, so take a look at the following recipes for some inspiration:

[Spring Sunshine Salad](#)

[Simple Spring Salad](#)

[Romaine Pesto and Egg Stuffed Tomatoes](#)

[Vietnamese Inspired BBQ Pork Salad](#)

[Butter Lettuce Salad with Tahini-Honey Dressing](#)

[Grilled Tofu Salad with Miso Dressing](#)

[Grilled Shrimp Lettuce Cups with Tropical Fruit](#)

[Romaine Lettuce-Carrot-Cucumber Juice](#)

[Tangy Lettuce Slaw](#)

[Sweet and Sour Lettuce Salad \(Pickled Lettuce\)](#)