



IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK

This is what we are aiming to harvest this week, weather permitting!

- Garlic
- Cabbage
- Onions
- Rutabaga
- Fennel
- Choi (or another cooking green, depending on what we can harvest)
- Herb—oregano, rosemary, or lemongrass, your choice!
- Carrots

Kathy Koch, Teri Vanhall, and Rosemary Sheets, your CSA managers for this rotation, will provide Daisy May on the CD player for your listening pleasure at CSA distribution this week! Hope you enjoy the music!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, March 3, ALL DAY, Michigan Organic Ag Conference at the Kellogg Center. Come learn all about issues in organic production happening right here in Michigan. This conference is geared towards both producers and consumers who are interested in organic. For more information go to www.moffa.org and click on the Michigan Organic Conference link.

Tuesday, March 6, 4:3–8:30ish, SLOW FOOD Red Cedar first ever event at the Kellogg Center. Come to this SLOW FOOD extravaganza to celebrate and participate in a local, slow meal prepared by Michigan chefs and food provided by a host of Michigan growers and producers. There will be a full-course dinner as well as speakers and a “farmer’s market” exhibit area. Want to learn more about SLOW FOOD RED CEDAR? Contact Barb Mutch at mutchb@msu.edu. Tickets for this event are \$45 and include the four-course meal, speakers, exhibit, and great conversation!

FARM UPDATE

Okay, this is getting a little crazy. Yesterday I thought we were on the up and up...it was 20 degrees at 7:00 AM and Jeremy said, “It feels balmy!” And then, WHAM!, we are back to where we were last week, and the week before, and the week before...ugh! It’s not that we mind or can’t handle cold temperatures, but when we don’t get even a little break (and mainly with these night-time lows still hovering around 0 degrees F) our poor hoophouse greens just don’t get a chance to thaw and therefore we don’t get the opportunity to harvest

them. And guess what? This week is looking cold and cloudy ALL WEEK. The key to harvesting this time of year is getting those sunny days when the houses heat up to 60 or 70 degrees and the plants thaw and we can harvest. So, we are doing our best to provide you with the fresh green—hopefully two or three items—along with the stored crops. But it is dicey when we have this kind of weather!

The good news is that we are two weeks into February and we are well under way with our spring and early summer seeding. All of our onions and leeks have been seeded and we have our eyes on April to get them out into the fields. We have constructed new germination chambers in our greenhouse and they seem to be working quite well. Our certificate students are getting their hands dirty and are being patient with this weather...those needed sunny days are also critical for us to get into the houses to do bed preparation for the next round of crops, and without that sunshine, we can't uncover the plants or beds to work. So, patience is a virtue and we are working on maintaining it...

For now let's focus on our veggie of the week, and celebrate that we have local, organic, MICHIGAN produce available to us in this frigid time of year!

Hope you enjoyed the celeriac gratin last week. We are hoping to continue to highlight some of the more obscure or lesser known veggies each week. But, we would LOVE your input for recipes you make for any of our veggies. Please send them in to us so we can share them with the whole CSA. Also, if any of you are ever inspired to concoct your recipe to share at CSA distribution for taste testing, we would love that too!! If you have ideas or thoughts about recipes or making a dish to share for CSA, please e-mail me at piercee@msu.edu.

VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: FENNEL!

ABOUT FENNEL:

Fennel is a versatile vegetable that plays an important role in the food culture of many European nations, especially in France and Italy. Its esteemed reputation dates back to the earliest times and is reflected in its mythological traditions. Greek myths state that fennel was not only closely associated with Dionysus, the Greek god of food and wine, but that a fennel stalk carried the coal that passed down knowledge from the gods to men.

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. The scientific name for fennel is *Foeniculum vulgare*.

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. Fennel is slightly sweet, adding a refreshing contribution to the ever-popular Mediterranean cuisine. Be sure to add some fennel to your selection of fresh vegetables from the autumn through early spring when it is readily available and at its best.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS:

Like many of its fellow spices, fennel contains its own unique combination of phytonutrients—including the flavonoids *rutin*, *quercetin*, and various *kaempferol glycosides*—that give it strong antioxidant activity. The phytonutrients in fennel extracts compare favorably in research studies to BHT (*butylated hydroxytoluene*), a potentially toxic antioxidant commonly added to processed foods.

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. If left unchecked, these free radicals cause cellular damage that results in the pain and joint deterioration that occurs in conditions like osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. 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 percent of the daily value (DV) for fiber, 5.9 percent of the DV for folate, and 10.3 percent of the DV for potassium.

RECIPES

Creamy Fennel Soup

2 cups stock (chicken, beef, vegetable....)
1 bulb fennel, about 1 pound
1 sliver garlic
2 tbsp. chopped onions
1 tbsp. lemon juice (or more to-taste)
1 tsp. lemon zest, chopped
½ tsp. dried dill weed (or 1½tsp. fresh)
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 quart nonfat yogurt

Clean and slice the fennel bulb, reserving any greens for garnish. Cook the fennel in the stock with the garlic and shallots until soft. Purée in a blender with the lemon juice and zest, and the spices. Strain the purée if you wish a smoother texture. Combine well with the yogurt and chill. Serve garnished with chopped fennel greens or chopped cilantro.

Liz's Fennel Recipe

2 bunches small red onions
2 bulbs fennel, cleaned and quartered
2 tbsp. good olive oil
2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
2 to 3 tbsp. parmesan cheese (freshly grated)
Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Put olive oil in bottom of roasting pan. Coat onions and fennel by rolling them in pan. Pepper lightly. Cover with foil and seal tightly. Roast for 35 minutes until tender when pierced with fork. Uncover, sprinkle with balsamic vinegar and coat with Parmesan. Cook uncovered at 375 for 10 to 15 minutes (until Parmesan melts and vegetables are lightly browned).

Oven Potatoes with Fennel

20 ounces Yukon Gold potatoes, cut in ½" cubes
1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed and cut in 1" slices
1 medium sweet onion, diced
1 tbsp. fresh parsley, minced finely
2 tsp. vegetable oil
½ tsp. salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. In large bowl, combine potatoes, fennel, onion, parsley, oil, salt and pepper; toss gently until well coated. Arrange mixture in a single layer on a prepared baking sheet. Bake, turning occasionally, until potatoes are crisp on all sides, 30–35 minutes. Serve immediately.

MSU Student Organic Farm Contact Information

Farm Phone: 230-7987

Farm Managers: Jeremy Moghtader, Corie Pierce; Assistant Manager, Jay Tomczak

SOF Student Farmers: Sam Cooper, Andy Fles, Tim Heuer, Trevor Johnson, Aryn Labrake, Amanda Taylor, Luke Tomczak

OFCP Students: Linda Anderson, Dan Bair, James Garthe, Anna Kaschner, Kathy Koch, Rosemary Sheets, Tom Stump, Teri Vanhall, Maggie Wright