



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

April 11, 2006 – Issue 31

Spring 05  
Week 6 of 12

## This Week's Share

Navel oranges  
Broccoli  
Rainbow carrots  
Beets  
Red onions  
Garlic  
Sugar snap peas  
Salad mix  
Dandelion greens

## Recipes in this Issue

Beet Roesti with Rosemary  
Dandelion with Spaghetti  
Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas



David and Kathryn Heininger of Black Mesa Ranch with the newest kids on the block. Kidding began early this year, and the Heiningers have been busy ever since. Visit [www.BlackMesaRanchOnline.com](http://www.BlackMesaRanchOnline.com) to view more pictures and read more stories about the rest of the spring births. One doe has even had quads!

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In today's world, **spring** is a scientific, concrete reality that begins on March 20, the vernal equinox, or the day sun crosses the equator. Prior to scientific understanding of the earth's rotation, however, *spring* was a general term that described the conjunction of many discrete events. The ancient Greek word for spring, ὥρα (pronounced *hōra*), from which we derive our modern English word, *hour*, meant not 60 minutes but rather "opportune moment," the precise moment when a variety of events came together in unison—lengthening days, shorter nights, the sun moving northwards, animals mating, plants in flower, the return of migratory birds. Other seasons were also conjunctions of many events, but none seemed to explode with such energy, variety, and rapidity as spring—hence, *hora*, which loosely translates into English as "season," for the Greeks meant not only *a* season but *the* season in which the timing of events was magnified and made most conspicuous. *Hora* is quite underway and evident both at Crooked Sky Farms and Black Mesa Ranch.

At **Crooked Sky Farms**, with daytime temperatures still under 85 and nights above 55, this is the best time of year for the germination and growth of most vegetables. It is also the busiest time of year at Crooked Sky Farms, with lots of sowing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Farmer Frank has also had to do a lot of regrettable plowing-under, however, of less-popular produce such as dandelion greens, kale, turnips and mustard greens, which have stayed in the fields and reached maturity without being harvested because there has been less demand for these produce items than for others.

## **Black Mesa Ranch Candy Available for Easter at the CSA**

We have fresh Dark Debris, Milky Rubble, Butter Almond Toffee, and Truffles available from Black Mesa Ranch just in time for Easter Sunday, April 16. Unfortunately, David couldn't eke out enough cream to make caramels (there's still not enough milk left over from the unexpectedly abundant kidding season). This will be our last order of candy until Christmas.

## **Black Mesa Ranch Kidding Season Two-Thirds Complete**

Twenty-one of Black Mesa Ranch's 30 does have kidded, giving birth to 21 doelings and 20 bucklings. The most recent birth is Esppez (Espy), a 9.5-pound beautiful black girl with frosted ears born on April 1 (last year, the biggest kid, born from the same doe, was 9.7 pounds). Espy arrived at the same time as an NPR reporter. "The reporter arrived," say David and Kathryn, "and ended up conducting the interview in the barn—with both of us still gloriously covered in birthing goo. Good thing the interview was for radio!"



## **Spring Produce on the Way Out**

The **broccoli** in our shares this week will be the last until next year. Philippe managed to rescue the last of the **dandelion greens** before Frank plowed them under, for those of us who appreciate this delectable treat! The **garlic** in this week's share is still left over from last year's harvest. But this year's garlic will be ready any time now.

## **Summer Produce on the Way In**

If all goes well and as hoped and planned, we should have **summer squash** by April 18; **green beans** by May 5; **tomatoes** by May 14; **sweet corn** and **cucumbers** by May 20; **okra** by May 26; **watermelons** by May 28; and other **melons** by June 1.

Unlike other root vegetables, the **beet** (*Beta vulgaris*) has intense, highly saturated, jewel-like colors. Besides the familiar red-purple of the common round beet, there are golden beets the color of carnelian, pink beets, and white beets, and even two-toned beets—the Chioggia variety, for example, which resembles a red-and-white bull’s-eye in cross-section. Nor are all beets round. There is a dark red beet with an elongated, cylindrical root that is perfect for making uniform slices. There are variations in flavor as well as in size and color: Chioggia beets are quite mild in flavor, while the larger red beets will be much stronger, with a little bitterness to them. What all beets have in common is a remarkably high sugar content.



Red beets start bleeding their vivid juice as soon as they are cut. For any recipe, beets must be cooked until they are completely tender but not mushy. If they are even a little undercooked, they may retain an unpleasant bitterness. **When is it done?** When you can easily pierce a beet with a skewer or thin-bladed knife, it’s done.

### **Beet Roesti with Rosemary**

*Makes 4 servings*

**Time:** 20 minutes

An almost unbelievably sweet and wonderful side dish. The sugar in the beets caramelizes, and the flavors of the rosemary, beets, and butter meld beautifully.

- 1 to 1-1/2 pounds beets
- 1 teaspoon coarsely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup flour
- 2 tablespoons butter

1. Trim the beets and peel them as you would potatoes; grate them in a food processor or by hand. Begin preheating a medium to large nonstick skillet over medium heat.
2. Toss the grated beets in a bowl with the rosemary and salt, then add about half the flour; toss well, add the rest of the flour, then toss again.
3. Place the butter in the skillet and heat until it begins to turn nut-brown. Scrape the beet mixture into the skillet, shape it into a nice circle, and press it down with a spatula. Turn the heat to medium-high and cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the bottom of the beet cake is nicely crisp, 6 to 8 minutes.

Slide the cake out onto a plate, top with another plate, invert the two plates, and slide the cake back into the pan. Continue to cook, adjusting the heat if necessary, until the second side is browned. Cut into wedges and serve immediately.

Eating **dandelion greens** is a springtime ritual in many cultures. In traditional use, the dandelion’s bitter greens have been used to cleanse the liver and kidneys. Dandelions are inherently bitter, but the significant nutritional profile of dandelions makes it worthwhile to find ways to mask or reduce the bitterness.



### **Dandelion with Spaghetti**

*Makes 2 servings*

In combination with certain foods, such as tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, and cheese in this recipe, dandelion greens lose their edge of bitterness. Precooking in water also helps.

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Pinch of hot pepper flakes
- 16-ounce can stewed tomatoes with juice
- Salt

Dandelion greens, washed, stemmed, and chopped into bite-sized pieces

Grated Romano or Parmesan cheese

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet and sauté garlic and a pinch of hot pepper flakes until garlic is golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Add tomatoes. Simmer, covered, for 10 to 15 minutes. Season with salt.
2. Cook the spaghetti in boiling water for 3 minutes less than directed on the package. Add the dandelion greens and continue cooking until spaghetti is done. Make sure that the dandelion leaves are submerged in the water during cooking. Drain well.
3. Combine tomato sauce, pasta, and dandelion greens. Heat and serve with grated cheese.



A sweet and crispy cross between the snow pea and the garden pea, the **sugar snap pea** is completely edible, pod and all.

### **Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas**

Top and tail the sugar snap peas, pulling off the threadlike strings. Slice on the diagonal into ½-inch-thick pieces. Put into a sauté pan with ¼ inch of water, butter, and a sprinkling of salt. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat to medium. Cook until done, about 3 minutes. The water and butter should be emulsified and coat the snap peas, which should be bright green and just tender. Adjust the seasoning and serve. You can also cook fresh pea shoots with the snap peas.