



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Winter '06-'07  
Week 11 of 12

## This Week's Harvest

Grapefruit  
Dry Beans  
Beets  
Carrots  
Spring Mix  
Red Russian Kale  
Siamese Dragon Mix (for salads  
or light cooking)  
Dill, Cilantro or Parsley

## Recipes and Tips

Beets  
Grapefruit Glazed Beets  
Black Spanish Radishes  
Greens  
Italian Beans and Greens Soup

## Dry Beans - Tips



Rinse beans in a colander and soak them overnight or for at least 8 hours. Place the drained beans into a large pot or Dutch oven and cover with 3 cups fresh water for each cup of beans, or to about one inch above the beans. Add 1 tablespoon oil (to prevent boiling over) and seasonings as desired (including the garlic clove and dried chile pepper that farmer Frank usually includes with his beans). Boil gently with lid tilted until tender when tasted, usually 1 to 1½ hours. Add hot water as needed to keep beans just covered with liquid. The best rule is to test frequently during cooking, and then come to your own decision when beans are tender and taste "done."

## Crooked Sky Farm News

The farm is already gearing up for the summer. Into the ground under the hoop houses this past week went corn, tomatoes and squash. Mostly heirloom varieties, of course. Because heirlooms are more susceptible to unpredictable yields than more widely available commercial seeds, Farmer Frank also usually plants a few commercial varieties as well, which he can fall back on in case the heirlooms don't yield as well as expected.

## Yes! More Beets

Beets are king at the farm this year. And, unless our members instigate a mass rebellion against them, it looks like we will get them for awhile longer. Here's the scoop on this amazing vegetable.



The beet (*Beta vulgaris*) is a flowering perennial plant in the family *Chenopodiaceae*, native to the coasts of western and southern Europe. The root and leaves are edible and an important food crop. Beetroot can be peeled, steamed, and then eaten warm with butter as a delicacy; cooked, pickled, and then eaten cold as a condiment; or peeled, shredded raw, and then eaten as a salad. The leaves and stems can be steamed briefly as a vegetable, although this is preferably done with young plants. These and older leaves and stems can be sliced and stir-fried and have a flavor resembling taro leaves. The stems can also be cooked with other foods (e.g., black beans) for an increased nutritional value.

## Nutrition

Beets contain significant amounts of vitamin C in the roots, and the tops are an excellent source of vitamin A. They are also high in folate, as well as soluble and insoluble dietary fiber and several antioxidants. Beetroot is among the sweetest of vegetables, containing more sugar even than carrots or sweet corn.

## Beetroot Color

It is a popular misconception that the color of red beetroot is due to a pigment known as anthocyanin, which is the pigment in red cabbage. It is, in fact, due to a purple pigment, betacyanin, and a yellow pigment, betaxanthin, known collectively as betalins. Other varieties of beetroot which are not the usual deep red, such as 'Burpee's Golden' and 'Albina Vereduna', have greater or lesser amounts of the two betalin pigments. Betacyanin in beetroot may cause red urine and feces in some people who are unable to break it down. Don't be alarmed, it is harmless.

## Medicinal uses

The Romans used beetroot as a treatment for fevers and constipation, amongst other ailments. Since Roman times, beetroot juice has been considered an aphrodisiac. It is a rich source of the mineral boron, which plays an important role in the production of human sex hormones.

## Creative CSA Cooking with Sara

Sara's secret to CSA cooking is to create recipes as *variations on a theme* so they're readily adaptable to the ingredients at hand – an easy-to-learn approach that's perfect for cooking with your weekly CSA share. Sara's Feb. 10 cooking class (from left to right): Sarah, Jodi, Emily, Sara, Paul, Sharon, Jared and Elizabeth.



### **Beets - Basic Use**

Grate peeled raw beets to add textural interest to salad and salsa. Bake beets for maximum flavor, sweetness, and ease of peeling. Steam whole beets over water aromatized with orange peel, anise or fennel seeds, cardamom, cinnamon stick, marjoram or thyme; when tender, peel and slice beets, then strain and reduce the cooking liquid; add salt, butter, and the peeled and sliced beets to the liquid.

It only takes about 20-50 minutes to boil beets (depending on size), but you need to watch out for those 'beetroot' splashes. Before adding the beets to the water, remove as much of the top leaves as possible – but leave some of the stalk (about ½”) in place as this helps the beets retain their flavor. Test for doneness using a sharp knife; it should penetrate easily to the core. Drain away the water and allow to cool. You'll then be able to easily 'rub' away the outer skin under cold water. The beets are ready to eat.

Beet greens can be steamed or blanched and combined with caramelized onions for a side dish. They add a new dimension to chunky vegetable soups and pasta or bean dishes.

### **Grapefruit Glazed Beets**

By Heidi DeCosmo, TCSA

1 bunch beets, peeled and cut in small cubes  
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil  
1/8 teaspoon sea salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon orange zest  
1/2 cup fresh unsweetened grapefruit juice  
1/2 cup orange juice  
1 teaspoon honey  
1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

Preheat the oven 425F (220 C).

Place the beets on a baking sheet. Toss with the olive oil, salt and pepper. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the beets have just softened.

For the glaze: Heat a small saucepan over medium high heat and add the other ingredients. Bring to a low boil and reduce the sauce by half. Toss the beets with the thickened sauce.

### **More beets recipes on our website!**

### **Black Spanish Radishes - Tips**

Do you still have some of those little devils left over from last week? Slice them thin and serve them on crackers, topped with Greek yogurt (or sour cream), and sprinkled with salt and pepper. Or try our [Black Spanish Radish Noodle Soup](#) (on our website, under Recipes > Radish). Not in the mood for that right now? No worries, these radishes stay good for months!

### **Greens – Tips**

Excerpt from Sara's cooking class handbook

Cooking greens grow well in our winter climate and we will continue getting them into the spring time. If you feel overwhelmed, don't despair. They are used in all types of cuisine and you should have no trouble incorporating them in almost any dish, once you get the hang of it. Leafy cooking greens are among the most nutritious and healthful vegetables available. They are loaded with all sorts of vitamins and minerals and are important sources of iron, calcium and protein in a vegetarian diet. Store greens in a plastic bag or wrapped in a moist paper towel in the veggie drawer. Separate beets, turnip and radish greens from their bulbs and store them separately. Hardier greens like kale and collards will last much longer than more delicate varieties. To clean your greens, fill a large bowl with cool water and completely submerge the greens you want to use. Swishing them around will get rid of dirt hidden in curly parts or along stems. Drain on a towel. Different varieties of greens are interchangeable in most recipes but will of course yield different results. Just remember to cook tougher leaves longer. The stems of bok choy and chard can almost be considered a different vegetable and will add great celery-like crunch to whatever you are cooking. Get into the habit of throwing a handful of greens into whatever you are preparing; they will cook down significantly and a huge bunch will practically disappear into a large pot of soup.

### **Italian Beans and Greens Soup**

Excerpt from Sara's cooking class handbook

This is one of my favorite soup recipes. If you still have Farmer Frank's tepary beans, use those, otherwise a white navy bean, or Farmer Frank bean mix will do just fine. The spices in this recipe are meant to taste similar to Italian sausage. If you eat meat, by all means add a bit of sausage to make the soup richer.

1 bunch greens (kale or collards preferably) roughly chopped  
3 potatoes, diced  
1-2 cups cooked beans  
a few cloves of garlic, chopped  
½ onion, chopped  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon thyme  
fennel seed, crushed gently  
dried rosemary  
1 bay leaf  
cayenne to taste  
1-2 tablespoons butter  
salt and pepper to taste  
½ cup cream, milk or yogurt (optional)

In a heavy stockpot, sauté onion in oil until golden brown, then add garlic and potatoes. Cook briefly stirring constantly to keep garlic from burning. Add a couple quarts of water and the spices, then bring to a boil. Reduce heat slightly and add greens and beans to the pot. Cook for about 20 minutes until potatoes are tender. Add butter, cream and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer on low for a few more minutes and serve.