



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Celeriac, Leeks & Amara Greens... Shifting Gears with the Season

by Andrea Yoder

While this week has actually blessed us with beautiful warm days, last weekend was downright chilly with temperatures into the 50's. I finally tipped the balance of denial that summer is fading and fall is moving in. Summer by no means marks the end of our growing season and this week we have several new items in the box. We had a hard time deciding which one would be the featured vegetable, so we narrowed it down to three in this week's newsletter.

The first vegetable is green top celery root. This vegetable is also referred to as "celeriac." It's in the same family as celery however celery root is cultivated for the root instead of the stalk and leaves. The root is the portion you eat and it has a mild celery flavor. The green tops resemble celery stalks, but they are too tough and fibrous to eat. They do have a lot of flavor in them and can add depth to stock and broth. The root portion is the part you'll actually be eating. The exterior is bumpy and has a tangle of roots on the bottom. You need to peel away this outer layer to get to the white, dense flesh inside. My technique is to cut the celery root into quarters using a sharp chef's knife. It's easy to hold a quarter in your hand and peel it using a paring knife.

Celery root may be eaten raw or cooked. A classic French preparation for a simple raw celery root salad is celeriac remoulade. It consists of shredded celeriac dressed with a mixture of mayonnaise and Dijon mustard. There are many variations of this recipe, but our favorite includes shredded apple, chopped cranberries and a bit of honey. Celery root is most frequently used in soups, stews, braised meat dishes, gratins and root mashes. It seldom takes center stage, but often plays more of a supporting role by laying the foundation for flavor and balancing out other ingredients. It pairs well with a variety of other root vegetables, cream and cheese.

Our next featured vegetable is leeks. They are similar to celeriac in that they are more subtle, mild in flavor and often help round out a dish instead of being the dominant flavor. Leeks are in the onion family, but they do not have as high of sugar content and thus don't caramelize like an onion. Leeks are best when cooked gently over medium to low heat only to soften them. When cooked in this manner they become smooth, buttery and silky. They pair well with other roots, potatoes, cream, cheese, mushrooms, etc.

This Week's Box

DESIREE POTATOES: With a rosy skin and gold flesh, you'll find these potatoes are more waxy and less starchy. Use them in a roasted potato salad with mustard vinaigrette.

BROCCOLI ROMANESCO OR CAULIFLOWER: Martha Stewart's Broccoli Romanesco and Parmesan Puree is a perfect use for either (or both) of these two vegetables! Serve with crusty bread, chips or crackers or freshly sliced vegetables.

ITALIAN GARLIC: Whenever you can, keep your garlic raw. Doing so ensures that you're getting the most bang for your buck when it comes to garlic's nutritional benefits. Include garlic raw in dips like hummus, on salads or in pasta.

RED ONIONS: Use up the last of your summer cucumbers with Bon Appétit's Cucumber and Charred Onion Salad. Or keep your onions raw (which is highly beneficial—just as with garlic) and thinly slice them onto a kale and mustard green salad.

ORANGE CARROTS: Feature these super sweet carrots in your next cake, batch of bread or cheesecake. Or, roast them along with red onions and garlic and serve over quinoa.

YELLOW BELL PEPPER: Dice these colorful peppers and add them to a simple tossed salad.

MINI-SWEET PEPPERS: Marinate these sweet little peppers for up to 2 hours in a mixture of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic, shallots, salt, pepper and your choice of herbs. Roast or grill them for 10 minutes and voilà!

BROCCOLI: Check out Food52's recipe for Broccoli, Lemon and Parmesan Soup, or for an equally savory use, toss your florets with olive oil, tahini, garlic and lemon juice and roast for 10 minutes.

GRAPE TOMATOES: Tomatoes and eggplant are a natural pair. Try your hand at Smitten Kitchen's Caponata, Saveur's Mashed Smoky Eggplant with Tomatoes or the classic Iman Bayildi—Turkish stuffed eggplant with loads of seasoned tomatoes.

JALAPEÑOS: For a tasty addition to quesadillas or fish tacos, dice a jalapeño or two and combine with 1 cup of plain yogurt, 1 Tbsp lime juice, lime zest, ½ tsp of cumin and a pinch of salt. Whisk together until smooth and refrigerate until it's ready for use.

RED BOSTON LETTUCE: For a new and exciting salad, check out Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid's Lettuce Salad with Hot Beef Dressing—find the recipe online at TheKitchn. You can easily leave the beef out for a purely veg-friendly option, and you can find Jinjiang at any Asian grocery.

GREEN-TOP CELERIAC: Shaved celeriac is a tasty addition to homemade pizza, while julienned celeriac and carrots make a rather fine remoulade—toss with dill, lemon juice and mayo.

LEEKs: They're here! And David Lebovitz knows how to treat a leek right. Check out his featured recipe for Leeks with Mustard-Bacon Vinaigrette on Food52. Leeks also make excellent additions to hearty fall and winter soups, fried rice and pasta dishes.

AMARA MUSTARD GREENS: Cook this green as you would collards. The leaves will need to cook with moisture for 15-20 minutes or until tender. See the main article for more information.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH: Roast your spaghetti squash and serve individually with sage and orange zest, in a gratin with Parmesan and black pepper or as a base (in lieu of pasta) for turkey Bolognese.

In the field, dirt is thrown up on the lower part of the leek. This is part of the growing practice to keep the shank of the leek white. You may find some dirt between the inner layers. It's important to cut the leek in half and either wash it before you cut it any further, or cut it first and then wash it in a colander where the excess water may drain off. The white portion of the leek is most tender. The top portion that has more of a bluish-green

color is generally thicker. Many people discard this portion, but don't fall into this habit- it can be used to flavor stocks, etc.

Finally, we have a new vegetable this week. The bunching green in your box this week is called **Amara**. It actually originated in Ethiopia where it is a very common green also known as Ethiopian Kale, Ethiopian Blue Mustard, Highland Kale and in Ethiopia the name is Gomenzer. So is it a mustard or a kale? Technically it's classified

as a mustard, but it does share some qualities of kale including a more sturdy leaf and a thicker stem than traditional mustard greens. As far as flavor is concerned, it is a bit more similar to mustard. When eaten raw it has the spicy peppery bite of mustard, which mellows out with cooking. Typically the thick stems are discarded and the thin stems and leaves are eaten.

I read about this vegetable a year or so ago in a culinary magazine, but this is the first time we've had access to the seed. Menkir Tamrat is credited with introducing this vegetable crop to the United States just recently. His story was told in the Fall/Winter 2011 issue of *Edible Magazine* for the Bay Area of California. Tamrat came to the US from Ethiopia in 1971 to go to school. He had every intention to return to his country, however a revolution occurred in that country in 1974 and came under the rule of a Soviet-backed military ruler who used mass killings, forced deportation, and hunger in an effort to control the people. Tamrat was not able to return to his country and stayed in the U.S. Ethiopia was once referred to as the "breadbasket

of Africa" and was able to maintain its biodiversity and stay true to the cuisine of its culture. Tamrat found it very hard to find his traditional foods in the US and, after growing tired of trying to make substitutions, decided to start growing some of his traditional foods here. Eventually he connected with Fred Hempel, a plant biologist and owner of a farm and nursery in California. Tamrat got seeds from Ethiopia and, together with Hempel, they started growing them out and producing more seed. While Ethiopian Kale was not the only crop they worked with, it was one of the crops Tamrat introduced to this continent. I am intrigued by new crops and foods from different countries, as food is the common denominator that brings us all together as people. Tamrat shared the recipe for preparing Ethiopian Kale in the article published in the *Edible Magazine* mentioned above. It's as close as I can get to the "real" thing. If there are any members reading this that have more first-hand information about this country or this vegetable in particular, I'd love to learn more!

Gomen or Ethiopian Kale

This recipe was featured in *Edible East Bay*, Fall/Winter 2011

Serves 3-4

1 bunch Ethiopian Kale/Amara mustard greens	2 Tbsp finely grated ginger
¼ cup vegetable oil, divided	Salt and pepper, to taste
¼ cup chopped shallots or onion	1 mitmita (Ethiopian hot pepper) <u>Or</u> half of a jalapeño, split lengthwise, optional
2 Tbsp chopped garlic	1 Tbsp lemon juice, optional

1. Rinse the greens in cold water. Pull out and discard some of the bigger stems and veins. At this point you can either blanch the greens quickly in boiling water and chop them or just chop them without blanching.
2. Meanwhile, heat several tablespoons of the vegetable oil in a skillet and sweat the shallots or onions (don't let them caramelize). Then add the chopped garlic and grated ginger and saute gently for 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Add remaining oil and the chopped greens and cover the pot. Stir occasionally to ensure that the shallots and garlic do not caramelize. If the mixture begins to look dry as the greens are cooking down, add a small amount of water. Continue to cook, covered, stirring occasionally on low heat for about 30 minutes, depending on your taste and the tenderness of the greens.
4. Add salt and pepper, to taste. If adding the hot pepper, do it a couple of minutes before turning off the heat. Add the lemon juice and slightly mix the greens before serving.

Note: Carnivores might like to try the rendition of this dish known as Gomen Besiga. Start by braising about 2 pounds of beef or lamb rib meat with the bones until well cooked and then just follow the recipe above, adding everything else to the meat in the pan.

Celery Root Puree with Anjou Pear

"When summer fades and the markets fill with fall fruits and roots, make this savory-sweet puree of pears and celery root, a perfect accompaniment to roast pork tenderloin or to pork of any kind."

Serves 8 as a side dish	½ cup dry vermouth
1 large celery root, trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1-inch cubes	¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
Kosher or fine sea salt, to taste	½ cup heavy whipping cream, warmed
4 Anjou pears, about 2 pounds	Freshly ground white pepper, to taste
¼ cup unsalted butter	

1. Fill a 6-quart saucepan two-thirds full of water. Add the celery root and 1 tsp salt, cover partially, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat so the water simmers and cook until the celery root is tender when pierced with a knife, about 15 minutes. Drain the celery root in a colander and return it to the pan. Place the pan over low heat for 1 minute to evaporate any excess moisture.
2. Meanwhile, using a vegetable peeler, peel, halve and core the pears and cut them into 1-inch chunks. In a large frying pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the pears and ½ tsp salt and cook, stirring occasionally until the pears are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the vermouth and nutmeg and continue cooking until the pears are very soft and the sauce thickens, about 5 minutes more. Remove the pan from the heat.
3. In a food processor, combine half each of the celery root, pears and cream and process until completely smooth. Transfer the puree to a warmed serving bowl. Repeat with the remaining celery root, pears and cream and add to the bowl. Season with salt and white pepper.
4. Serve immediately or keep warm in the top of a double boiler.

Recipe borrowed from Diane Morgan's book, *Roots*. Her book of more than 225 recipes covers a wide variety of root vegetables, many of which we grow. Her recipes are interesting and the cookbook is informative and easy to use.

Leeks & Cheese Mash

"The quantities are deliberately vague because of the nature of leftovers. A recipe for which we must use our instinct"

A large leek
Butter
Leftover mashed potatoes
Cheese—anything you have around that needs using

1. Wash and chop the leek, then let it cook in a generous amount of butter, covered with a lid and a piece of wax paper if you wish, until soft. Season with salt and then scoop into a shallow ovenproof dish.
2. Spread the mashed potatoes on top of the leeks. Level them a little without packing them down too tightly. Dot small knobs of butter over the surface, cover with grated or crumbled cheese, then bake in a hot oven until the cheese has melted and the potatoes are heated through.

This recipe is taken from Nigel Slater's book, *Tender: A Cook and His Vegetable Patch*. Slater is a British food writer who writes honestly about growing & cooking his own vegetables, mixing personal experience with descriptive prose.