



# High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 20: July 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2012

## Flower Talk, by Jeanne

We have offered flowers with the CSA shares for as long as we have been farming, at first for everyone and then as an optional add-on. We have always enjoyed having flowers to feed the soul while the vegetables feed the body. We like being able to provide an organic alternative to the extremely chemical intensive flower industry—why should we poison ourselves and our planet just to add a little beauty to our lives? Especially now, with so many flowers coming from Central and South America where workers are being exposed to chemicals and conditions that are not allowed in the United States, it's nice to support a local family farm with good labor practices and protections. The Thomas Farm has been growing organically for over 35 years, and is now run by second-generation farmer (and Steve's cousin) Josh Thomas.

For as long as we have been offering flowers as an optional add-on we have had occasional problems of flowers walking off with the wrong subscriber. We know that 99% of the time this is simply a mistake. The story we most often hear when these unintentional flower-nappers come forward is that the member sent their spouse/child/neighbor/friend to pick up their CSA box that week and that person assumed that the flowers came with it. Unfortunately this means that the member who paid for those flowers doesn't get them and the farm has to refund or credit the money they paid us for them. This is a lose-lose situation, and we don't have a large enough profit margin to take a loss on the flowers. We have had more than the usual smattering of missing flower reports during the last session, so we thought we'd try something a little different.

Starting this week each flower bouquet will have the member's name on a sticker attached to it. Please be aware of this change and check the bouquets for the one with your name on it if you get flowers. If you are not a flower subscriber, please make sure that anybody you send to pick up your share knows that. And if you are one of those who accidentally took home a bouquet that wasn't yours, it's never too late to fess up! We understand how it happened, really, and you can save us some sleuthing work.

OK, enough griping, here's the good news. The flowers are looking especially lovely lately, and maybe you'd like to get a bouquet now and then even though you did not sign up for flowers every week. You can now do that! Just go to our web store the day after your pick-up and order a bouquet for the next week. You can also order a bouquet to be delivered every other week if that works better for your schedule or budget; this has to be done through Sarah—a quick e-mail to [csa@highgroundorganics.com](mailto:csa@highgroundorganics.com) will do the trick.

Enjoy your flowers!

## Strawberry Flats and Flower Bouquets Available

Order extra strawberries or flowers from our Web Store ([csa.farmigo.com/store/highgroundorganics](http://csa.farmigo.com/store/highgroundorganics)) up until noon the day before your delivery.

## Making Stock

from Chef Andrew Cohen

Although it is certainly easy enough to cook without using stocks, having some stock on hand in the freezer is like money

in the bank. It can help plain tasting dishes have more pizzazz, can save time when making soups, and makes executing sauces a snap. Stocks are used as a cooking medium instead of oils by some, as well. The dark stock is especially good for adding depth to vegetarian dishes.

These detailed instructions are intended to get you a deeply flavored stock on the first try. Not that you can really do something disastrous to vegetable stock, but it is easy to turn out an insipid pot of vegetable flavored broth. Read the recipe through a couple times, then make a stock. Then throw away the recipe because you won't need it anymore.

This week's box is a good starting point for making stocks with the **leeks**, **celery**, and **Italian parsley**. Go from there and make a lovely soup using some of the **filet beans**, **spinach** or

**chard**, and some **broccoli** or **cauliflower**. Don't forget to add in some of the **celery**. This soup would be great with some shreds of basil tossed in just before serving. The **spinach** and **filet beans** would be nice together as a salad dressed with a light rice vinegar based sesame oil dressing (See Sesame "Vinaigrette" under Light Japanese Style Dressings on the website). Having tasted some of the **celery** at the Farmstand, I can attest to the fact that it tastes so good it should be featured as its own dish. Try the Sautéed Celery recipe from the site.

## "Blond" Vegetable Stock

This blond vegetable stock is light in color, but not light in flavor or calories. Use this where you would a light chicken stock, as a soup base, or in vegetables. Be sure to start with cold water, and skim frequently.

2 large yellow onions, peeled	4 med. to large carrots, peeled and sliced into 1/8th inch coins
3 medium rutabagas, peeled	2 med. to small turnips, peeled

## This Week

Strawberries

Broccoli or Cauliflower

Bunched Spinach OR Red  
Chard

Bunched Leeks

Summer Squash OR Filet Beans

Celery

Italian Parsley

Flowers: Sunflowers, Snapdragons and  
Statice

3 stalks celery, cut into 1/8th inch slices	2 leeks, split lengthwise, washed
2 medium sized parsnips, peeled and cut into ¼ inch slices	3 cups button mushrooms, chopped
1 head garlic, halved across the cloves	10 sprigs fresh thyme
5 sprigs fresh marjoram (if available)	10 sprigs fresh flat leaf parsley (if available)
2 bay leaves	1 TBS black peppercorns
1 4"x4" piece of konbu (dried kelp available at Japanese markets, health food stores, and some grocery stores)	

4 medium yellow onions	4 medium to large carrots
2 medium rutabagas	2 medium turnips
3 stalks celery	2 leeks,
2-3 cups button mushrooms	1 head garlic
2 med-sized firm parsnips	10 sprigs fresh flat leaf parsley
10 sprigs fresh thyme	1 4"x4" piece dashi konbu*
2 bay leaves	1 TBS black peppercorns
Neutral flavored oil like grapeseed or sunflower, as needed	

Halve the onions through the root, place them flat side down on a cutting surface, and then make cuts ½ an inch apart that almost go all the way through, but not quite. This exposes more surface area without the onion falling apart and getting in the way when you skim. Cut across the leek at ¼ inch intervals, but do not cut all the way through. Halve each rutabaga and turnip horizontally, then quarter each half.

Place all the vegetables and the konbu into a large pot-at least 3 gallons-and fill the pot with cold water to cover the vegetables. The water should be half the level of the vegetables higher than the top of the vegetables. Bring the water to the boil, making sure to skim the surface of any scum as it rises. Once it boils, turn the heat down to a gentle simmer, and add the rest of the ingredients. Skim as necessary.

Simmer for 2-4 hours. Taste the stock. If it tastes thin, continue to simmer. If it tastes robust with plenty of vegetable flavor, turn off and allow to cool. When cool, strain into clean pot (or other containers) and chill. Discard vegetables. At this point, the stock may be frozen, or returned to the stove and reduced further to concentrate flavors. I recommend freezing some at this concentration, and reducing some to intensify the flavor. Stock will keep in the freezer for 3 months if covered closely with plastic wrap, 4-5 days in the refrigerator.

*Chef's Notes:* For deeper mushroom/umami flavor, take half the mushrooms and smash them with your hand or a pan bottom to get them to exude some liquid. This will enhance the stock and give it more depth of flavor.

## Dark Vegetable Stock

This stock is used as you would a dark chicken or other meat stock. Use it as a base for sauces and soups, and if you are feeling under the weather it is nice if you don't want to actually eat, but want some nutrition. Try it heated up with some fresh ginger in it. Konbu is a type of kelp. Seaweeds are used as a thickener in many things, from toothpaste to ice cream. Here it helps add a "density" and texture to the stock that usually happens from proteins in meats. Konbu, as well as mushrooms, have the "umami" flavors meat would usually provide, and they also contain glutamic acid, (the precursor of MSG; MSG works sort of like a taste bud dilator, and is actually derived from nature. It is when people distill it and use it as if it were salt that problems occur) which help boost the flavor of the stock. This stock can be reduced down and will thicken somewhat, though it will not get as dense as a beef stock or rich chicken stock. As you reduce the dark vegetable stock, it will get sweeter, so watch out. Be diligent in your skimming of the stock as it makes a brighter and cleaner flavored stock. If you do not have a large enough stockpot, cut the recipe in half, except the garlic and konbu.

Split onions across the center (not through the root) and char cut side and skin over open flame, grill, under broiler, or in a pan. Cook until cut side is blackened and skin is well charred. Allow onions to cool enough to handle without hurting yourself and scrape away the char. The back of a paring knife works well. This process caramelizes the sugars in the onion and brings out the pectin (natural vegetable equivalents to gelatin), and will provide color to the stock.

Peel carrots, rutabagas, turnips, and parsnips. Cut the carrots, parsnips, celery, and leeks into ¼ inch slices. Halve the rutabagas and turnips horizontally, then quarter each half. Roughly chop the mushrooms. Slice the head of garlic in half horizontally (across the cloves). Cut the surface of the onions in a cross-hatch, but do not cut all the way through, just enough to expose the inside of the onion to the water.

Heat a large stockpot (around 3 gallons) over medium heat. When hot, film the bottom with oil. Sauté mushrooms until soft and aromatic. Add the leeks until they turn "clear." Add oil as you go if needed to prevent sticking and burning, but use as little as possible. Add the carrots and parsnips and cook until they brown and begin to caramelize. Add the rutabagas and turnips and color just a little. Add the celery and cook for a minute or two. Add the garlic and onions and stir in.

Fill the pot with cold water to cover the vegetables. The water should be half the level of the vegetables higher than the vegetables. Bring to a boil and skim off all fats and scum on the surface. Continue to check as the temperature rises and be sure to skim all along. Different proteins coagulate at different temperatures, and you want to get them as they rise or they will make for a bitter stock. Skim until no more scum surfaces.

Turn heat down to simmer and add the rest of the ingredients. With lid set ajar, simmer stock gently for 3 to 4 hours. Taste the stock. If it tastes thin, continue to simmer. If it tastes robust, turn off and allow to cool. When cool, strain into clean pot (or other containers) and chill. Discard vegetables. After stock has chilled, check surface for fats and skim if necessary using a butter knife or paper towel. At this point, the stock may be frozen, or returned to the stove and reduced further to concentrate flavors. I recommend doing both.

*Chef's Notes:* \*Konbu, or Dashi-konbu, is a kelp that is appears in a lot of Japanese dishes. It is perfect for boosting the flavor of vegetable stocks and for adding a "mouth-feel" to the stock. It is available in Japanese markets, health food stores, and even some grocery stores. In Watsonville, I recommend Yamashita Market on Union Street.

Do not use hot water as a shortcut when making stocks. You are taking the time already, take all of it. Different proteins coagulate at different temperatures, and you want them to float up to the surface where you can skim them. They are bitter, and if you dump the vegetables into hot water, certain proteins will be locked into the vegetables and will flavor your stock.

*Everything in your box is certified organic and grown by High Ground Organics. Flowers are from the Thomas Farm.*