

The Worm's Voice

Red Wiggler's CSA Newsletter

Spring 2024 Week 2
May 22 & 25

IN THE SHARE

“ / ” indicates a choice

- Radishes
- Hakurei Turnips
- Spring Onions
- Greens Choices

PICK-YOUR-OWN

Look for the **BLUE** flags on items ready to pick!

RED

- Lovage
- Oregano
- Chives
- Tarragon
- German Thyme
- Peppermint

ORANGE

- Fennel
- Chamomile
- Lamb's Ear
- Sorrel

BROWN

- Verbena

YELLOW

- Sage
- Lemon Balm
- Yarrow

NEED HELP?

Just ask any RWCF staff or volunteer. We're here for you!

ICYMI (in case you missed it): Last week's [newsletter](#) had lots of farm info and tips on how to maximize your share. Take a [look!](#)

FARM NEWS

Though they won't be in the share until summer, one of the things we're focused on this week is potatoes. Specifically, the Colorado Potato Beetle. On our Monday Field Walk, the crew searched the leaves in our potato field for these insidious little pests. The adults themselves aren't so bad (and kind of cool looking, right?!?). But they mate! And lay eggs! And the eggs hatch! And that's where the trouble begins... The bright orange or red larvae are voracious, and can decimate a potato plant very quickly. They eat the leaves, but once the leaves are gone, the plant can't photosynthesize, which means the tubers can't grow. Which means less potatoes on our plates!



So, what do we do about it? Well, we start checking the plants every week in mid-Spring for mating adults, for egg clusters, and for larvae. Once we find them, we add a "CPB picking" task to our weekly calendar. CPB picking is not glamorous. You go out in to the field, inspect the plants (the sneaky buggers hang out on the underside of the leaves), and kill—either by dropping in soapy water or squishing—any eggs, larvae or adults you find. This task requires a lot of manpower at an already busy time of year. In fact, our Program Manager, Becca Roe, actually schedules volunteer groups specifically for this task!

Industrial farms spray a variety of insecticides on their crops to control this and other devastating potato pests. But many small farms like ours—organic or not—will try first to control CPBs using manual removal techniques, and only spray (in our case, a certified organic insecticide) if absolutely necessary to save the harvestable crop.



We're crossing our fingers that our early detection and consistent dedication (for some staff and volunteers, CPB picking season is their favorite time of year! I mean, look how squishable that little guy looks!) will allow us to keep ahead of the game and harvest lots of tasty potatoes in a couple of months. Until then, if you ever want to come out and join the CPB picking crew, you know where to find us!

Roasted Spring Onions with Sage Pesto **VEG, GF, DF (with modifications)**

I headed back to [the archives](#) this week for another “vintage” recipe. This one, from 2019, uses one of my favorite spring veggies—onions—and something unexpected—a pesto made from sage! There’s plenty of sage right now (pick some flower stalks while you’re there too!), so I thought it would be worth a try.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch spring onions
- Salt
- ¼ cup, plus 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small bunch sage leaves
- 1 clove garlic
- 3 teaspoons pine nuts, or coarsely chopped almonds
- 2 tbsp grated parmesan



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 F°
2. Wash onions. Cut off the root hairs, and slice each onion in half lengthwise. Coat the bottom of a baking dish with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and place the bulbs cut side down. Roast in center of the oven for 15 minutes.
3. In a food processor combine sage, garlic, pine nuts, and salt to taste. Pulse a few times. Add oil until the pesto mixes smooth, occasionally scraping down the sides. Remove onions from oven and toss with pesto (You don’t need to use it all. Save any extra for another dish). Return to the oven and cook for 10 more minutes or until onion bulbs are tender.

Chamomile Simple Syrup **VEG, DF, GF**

Friends, let’s talk about chamomile. We have a lot of it. It’s not going to last much longer. It’s delicious. Please pick it! It’s easy: just rake your fingers through the tangle of stalks and pop the heads off. It’s okay if they’re missing their petals—the flavor is mostly in the yellow pollen anyway. You can easily dry chamomile, but I actually prefer it fresh (if you think you don’t like chamomile, I implore you to “taste them again for the first time,” only fresh). An easy place to start is this simple syrup. Drizzle over ice cream, use in cocktails, sweeten sparkling water or iced tea—basically, use it anywhere you want a hint of floral sweetness. Pro tip: chamomile pairs very well with strawberries, which happen to be in season now as well!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup fresh chamomile flowers
- Zest of 1 lemon

DIRECTIONS

In a medium saucepan combine water and sugar, and bring to a low boil, stirring to dissolve all the sugar. Remove from heat, and add the chamomile flowers and lemon zest. Let steep for up to 24 hours. Strain, then discard chamomile and lemon zest. Store syrup in the refrigerator for up to a month.