

QUICK PICKLED RHUBARB

Adapted from liveeatlearn.com

3 stalks rhubarb, in 1/2" pieces	1/2 c sugar
2 inch piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced	1/2 tsp whole peppercorns
1 c hot water	6 pc whole cloves
1 c white wine vinegar	1 piece star anise

1. Stuff rhubarb and ginger into a 24-oz heat-safe vessel.
2. In a separate container, combine all other ingredients until sugar dissolves.
3. Pour vinegar mixture into the jar to cover all of the rhubarb and ginger.
4. Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving, ideally 24 hours.
5. Store in the refrigerator no more than 3 weeks. Try as a salad topping, yogurt topping, on a burger, or on a cheese plate.

SAGE TEA

Adapted from dailyteatime.com

5 fresh sage leaves, rinsed	Honey (optional)
1 c water	Lemon slice (optional)

1. Bring water to a boil.
2. Heat teapot by adding hot water and swirling it around. Discard water.
3. Add sage to teapot. Pour water over tea. Cover and steep for 5 minutes.
4. Strain out tea. Enjoy hot or iced.

RHUBARB MUFFINS WITH GREEK YOGURT

Adapted from infinebalance.com

1 c all-purpose flour	1/2 tsp kosher salt
1 c whole-wheat flour	1 c plain greek yogurt
3/4 c granulated sugar	8 Tbsp unsalted butter
2 1/2 tsp baking powder	2 eggs
1 tsp ground cinnamon	1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp baking soda	1 1/2 c rhubarb, 1/4" dice

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with baking cups.
2. Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt in a bowl.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together greek yogurt, melted butter, eggs, and vanilla until smooth. Add dry ingredients to wet mixture and lightly stir with spatula, do not overmix. Gently stir in the diced rhubarb. Batter will be thick.
4. Pour batter evenly into muffin cups. Bake 20-22 minutes until toothpick inserted in muffin comes out clean.
5. Let cool 5-10 minutes before removing muffins from tin. Serve warm.



Winter/Spring CSA News



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Rhubarb: Technically a vegetable, not a fruit, rhubarb stalks may have green and/or pink coloration when ready to eat. Store stalks in a plastic bag and keep in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator up to one week. Try it pickled, made into jam, frozen, or used fresh.

Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh as needed by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Winter Radishes: Refrigerate in a plastic bag or other closed container. Daikon and Watermelon radish will keep well for weeks.

Sweet Potato: Store at room temperature. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and blacken when cooked. Check weekly and use any that may soften, most will keep for weeks or months.

Mushrooms: Storing mushrooms in plastic bags or containers can cause discoloration, mold, or an undesirable texture. Refrigerate mushrooms in a paper bag with a paper towel inside to absorb moisture.

Grow with the Flow, Lost with the Frost

Just when we get a sense that we're caught up on planting, we realize it's time for another round of seeding and transplanting to keep the flow of food consistent and predictable. The ice, snow, frigid cold and floods disrupted some of our best-laid plans this spring, despite all our effort. Sometimes all you can do is the best you can do. But the planting we're doing now is preparing us for some beautiful things you can eat one or two or six months from now (psst - have you signed up for the Summer CSA yet?).

At Elmwood Stock Farm, we have a strategy to provide you a wide range of food choices, each grown to optimize their potential. Given the seed selection we have at our disposal, vagaries of the weather, the seasonal Bluegrass climate, and marketing opportunities, there is no algorithm to decipher the complexities. But since we like to have kale available all season, we don't like gaps in sweet corn season, and our customers' demand for tomatoes is insatiable, the plan is to keep them coming on a consistent basis. That's what started this whole thing, we want you to have the opportunity to eat the way we do.

Every what-to-plant-when decision revolves around one climatic phenomenon: frost. Some crops can tolerate frost, others don't even mind a hard freeze, but most hate the cold. So the instructions on the seed packet don't tell you a day on the calendar to plant, they tell you how many weeks before or after your last frost date you should do it. The cold-hardy crops are most of what we are offering right now, as they would have been seeded in a tiny window of opportunity in early March, well before our typical last frost date of Derby Day. We plant leaf yielders like spinach, arugula, and lettuce every few weeks all year so that you can eat your greens every week. Head-formers like the cabbages and broccoli are still on their way. They do best before the summer heat and humidity befalls them, so they are truly spring and fall only.

Potatoes go out in waves, several kinds at a time. Old timers say "s'posed to plant taters on Good Fridee," which we did this year. Their leathery leaves are somewhat frost tolerant, or the old-timers wouldn't tell us to plant them then. For early green bean and tomato crops, we look at the long range forecast and decide when to take a risk with these frost intolerant crops. We could plant them ahead of Derby, knowing they could be wiped out if last frost was after Derby. While that is a gamble, there are several more plantings of those crops to go out once the risk of frost is less.

Spacing out successive planting dates through the spring is not just an arithmetic calculation. All varieties of all crops come with an expected maturity date, so when we sow sweet corn in the spring, the many varieties we like mature at differing

rates. This allows the harvest of corn in batches over a long period of time, with just one trip through the field at planting time. Some varieties are more cold tolerant than others. However, the early sown seeds are slower to get established in the cold soil than the second round, so the second planting kinda catches up with the first one, which is why you see an abundance of some items from time to time, because of this weather-related overlap.

Given some gambling with frost to feed our excitement to get the season started, the real summer planting will begin after Derby. Tomatoes will go out in earnest. All kinds of colors and sizes will grace our presence after the Fourth of July. There is a bit of chest bumping between farmers to get tomatoes by the 4th, which is partly why we gambled on the frost date. With the impending humidity that goes with Bluegrass summers, which tomatoes don't really like, there will be two or three more settings of tomatoes to hopefully keep us into tomatoes until the vines are stripped ahead of first frost in October. There is a bit of chest bumping going on then as well.

Cucurbits, meaning summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, and melon, are transplanted several times throughout the season, as the same heat and humidity truly take their toll on them. Add the insect pressures on them and the plant diseases they vector in and you have a pretty high risk for disaster. We often pull insect barrier row covers over them to delay the invasion of pestilence, but they must come off when they flower so that the pollinators can do their job. After they have bloomed, the row cover can go back on. It's extra work, but a no-brainer alternative to applying toxic pesticides or planting GMO seeds.

Second guessing when to go out with cool season crops for fall and winter harvest is a tough call. They struggle to get started in the summer heat, but if you wait too late, they never size up or mature before frosts of October and freezes of November. Transplants of varying ages and maturity ratings help us buffer whatever Mother Nature decides to do. The plan is to set more greens in the high tunnels that will size up before the cold dark days of winter, then hold tight and await their harvest throughout the winter.

There's no way of knowing which frost is your last one. One year the last frost was April 17th, but we did not know that until after Derby Day. The following year the last frost was May 21st, but we did not know that on Derby Day. We have built into the budget the need to gamble with the weather and get crops out early so we can enjoy diversity of fresh veggies as soon as possible. Thank you for your support as we roll with the flow of food harvests here at Elmwood Stock Farm. We won't have everything all the time, so revel in each new crop as it comes, I know I do. — Mac