



## A Place on Earth CSA Notes, June 16-19, 2021

### In your share this week:

Basil; Rhubarb; Kale; Beets; Strawberries; Snap Peas; Garlic Scapes; Mixed Greens; Head Lettuce

**Family Visit:** My son Dan and his family are visiting, so this will be short, and we have already talked about most of the ingredients in today's box, except for beets and basil.

**Beets!** This is a much-maligned vegetable that does not deserve the reputation it sometimes gets. When I was a child, I did not like them very much, and neither did my kids, a generation later. The reason, I think, is because we boiled the beets, which is a sure way to remove the flavor. After all, that is what the cookbooks tell you to do.

**Old Directions:** Boil the beets in water after removing the greens. When tender, cool them and the skins slip off, and you can use them in a recipe.

**New Directions:** Remove greens and place cleaned beets in a covered casserole dish and bake for about 45-60 minutes in a 400-degree oven. When tender, allow to cool, and the skins will easily slip off, and they are sweet and ready to eat with a little butter and salt. Or place in a slow cooker/crockpot, along with 2-3 tablespoons of water and cook them on high for 3-4 hours until tender. Peel and eat with butter, in a salad, or other recipe.

**Don't Throw Away Those Beet Greens!** Beet Greens are among the best tasting greens in all the world, if you can just get enough for a meal, since they are usually not very robust. Just don't throw them away! However, if you have white beets, the greens are amazing and lush. *This week I received white beets, and they are fabulous!* I do hope you got white beets, too, but they all cook the same way. Also, white beets are sweeter than red or golden beets, so they are the most delicious. To cook the greens, remove the center stems, wash, and chop into bite-size pieces. Saute with onion and garlic (or chopped garlic scapes) but don't over-cook; they only need to be wilted, then served with butter and salt. Yum!

### Beets & Apples

1-pound fresh beets  
½ cup beet juice (if you boil the beets) or cranberry juice.  
2 medium apples, cored and cut into rings.  
1 tablespoon flour

1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice  
¼ to ½ cup (or less) brown sugar  
1 teaspoon salt, optional  
1-3 tablespoons butter

Scrub fresh beets, roast them in a covered casserole dish in the oven until done. Or cook in a crockpot/slow cooker as suggested above.) Remove skins and slice. Place half of the beets in a 2-quart casserole, followed by half of the apples. Repeat layers. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, flour, salt, vinegar, butter, and beet juice. Cook over medium heat until sugar is melted. Pour over apples and beets. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes, covered. Serves 4.

**Basil:** This was a first installment of what should be large bunches of basil several times this summer. Small amounts of basil are especially good to snip into salads, pasta dishes, tomato and fresh mozzarella salad, or any tomato dish.

I will share some recipes for basil later but let me first advise that basil does not freeze very well by itself. Yes, it's great in pesto, and dries very well, but I have not had good luck just freezing it by itself, the way I freeze dillweed, rosemary, mint, and some others. To dry the leaves, remove leaves from stems and put just the leaves between paper towels and microwave for increments of 20 seconds until they are dry and brittle. They also dry well in a gas oven with pilot light, or an oven that has a very low heat, such as 120 degrees. Dry until brittle. Or tie several branches with a string and tie the bunch to a nail/rod in a dry space until they are dry and brittle.

**To store basil and other dried herbs:** put them in a dark colored jar/container with a tight lid, in a cupboard away from light. They keep indefinitely like this. (The containers from "The Republic of Tea" are perfect for storing dried herbs on the shelf.) When using them in a cooked dish, be sure to crush them in the palm of your hand to release the flavor before adding to a dish.

**Did you lose a recipe from another year?** My friend Jan Eastburn has been putting these on my website, [www.phyllisfitzgerald.com](http://www.phyllisfitzgerald.com). Feel free to look for a recipe there, or send an e-mail to me at [phyllisfitzgerald@yahoo.com](mailto:phyllisfitzgerald@yahoo.com), and I'll forward it to you.

**Would you like to submit a recipe?** I'll be happy to share your favorite recipes for using CSA food. Just e-mail them and I'll include them in the notes.

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