

The Gannick* Weekly

Norwood CSA Newsletter

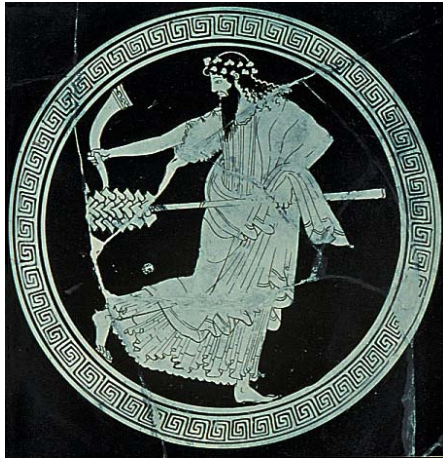
3400 Reservoir Oval East Bronx, NY 10467 212-229-7954 www.norwoodfoodcoop.org

* Gannick /GAN-nik/ - One who raises, eats or advocates organic foods and/or lifestyle.



THE FENNEL ISSUE

If you've never tried fresh fennel before, you're in for a treat this week. Beyond the fennel seed most people are familiar with, this plant is composed of a slightly sweet, crunchy white bulb, stalks, and green leaves. All of these parts are edible.



Fennel has been cultivated and used for a variety of purposes since ancient times, including medicinal (against vision loss, obesity, stomach problems, etc.) and culinary ones. In several parts of Europe, fennel was once – or now is – a staple vegetable, grown in large fields and eaten regularly. Ancient Greeks used the slow-burning dry center of the giant fennel (or *narthex*) to transport fire from place to place. So Prometheus was said to have stolen fire for human beings in a giant fennel stalk (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 566). Dionysus and his maenads carried the *thyrsus* made out of a giant fennel stalk and a pinecone – sometimes interpreted as symbols of farm and forest, respectively. In the middle ages, fennel was believed to repel evil and fairy spirits and so was used on Midsummer's Eve and significant agricultural feast days. In Italy, *benandanti*, anti-witches who derived their power from being born in the caul, carried stalks of fennel in their (possibly shamanic) battle against *malandanti* adversaries. If the *benandanti* won, the harvest would be abundant; if they lost, there would be famine.

Today, fennel is appreciated mostly for its mild licorice flavor and its role in Mediterranean and Provencale cooking. Its phytonutrients (also abundant in the cabbages, greens, garlic, and onions the Co-op has been eating lately) help prevent chronic illnesses, especially cancer and inflammatory disease. Fennel is a good source of vitamin C, fiber, folate, and potassium. It makes a delicious and nourishing raw snack, a versatile ingredient in cooking, or a fine mini-thyrsus centerpiece for your symposium. Read on for recipes!

Meeting Next Week

All are invited to attend a Co-op Meeting at 6:30 PM, Thursday, July 14, 2005, at the pick-up site. We will discuss how the season has begun, our planned contributions to the church (including gardening and tutoring), and any other issues members want to raise. Send proposed agenda items to Tanya at seanandtanya@yahoo.com, or call her at (718) 432-2567. Even if you can't attend, feel free to send Tanya any issues you think should be addressed at the meeting.

MESSAGE from ZAID

"We have been blessed with a couple of nice showers and cooler days. We are trying to get in our fall crops so that we can settle in with weeding and picking. Our 18-19 week old egg-laying chickens are starting to lay small eggs. We cracked upon a few this morning and they had 2 yolks. Our pond and creek came up due to the 2-3 inches got last week. Things are looking greener now and everything is responding well to less heat. We should have new potatoes in the share in a week or 2. Also, savoy cabbages and red cabbages will be coming soon." – 7/5/05

Farm Trip on Saturday!



We've been invited to join members of Prince George, another of Zaid's CSA, for a visit to Norwich Meadows Farm.

See page 2 for details.

Can't make the pick-up?

Last week we had lots of leftover vegetables. If you are unable to pick up your share, please call Michael Putos at (718) 324-0539 or Erin or Sean Miner at (718) 994-8491 or e-mail norwoodcsafoodcoop@yahoo.com, so that we can plan distribution accordingly.

Farm Trip Details

DATE: Saturday, July 9

TIME: We will depart from the Prince George (14 E. 28th St., between 5th and Madison, in Manhattan) at 7:30 AM sharp and arrive at Evans' Dairy Farm by 1 PM. We will eat lunch and then move on to Norwich Meadows Farm, meeting Zaid and his family. We will leave the farm around 4 PM and hope to be back by 9 PM.

COST: Per person, by income:

- Under \$23,000 – FREE
- Between \$23,000 and \$33,000 - \$10
- Above \$33,000 - \$20.

Please make out checks/money orders to “Prince George Associates LP”.

TRANSPORTATION: The coach bus has a restroom on board. We will make one quick stop on the way up and one on the way back.

FOOD: Snacks will be provided. It is suggested that you pack a lunch.

OTHER: Plan for a long day of traveling, dress comfortably, and be prepared to walk on farmland. We will go regardless of the weather, so try to plan accordingly. Bring an extra layer as we'll be outdoors and temperatures will be cooler in Norwich than they are here. Remember your camera!

Please call with any questions: Alexis, (212) 471-0857.



Norwich Meadows Farm

Don't forget to write!

Send farm trip stories and fennel recipes for the Newsletter to
norwoodcsafoodcoop@yahoo.com.

KITCHEN AID

How to Prepare, Cook, and Serve Fennel

To prepare fennel: Trim off the stalks at the point where they meet the bulb. Set aside the stalks to use in soups or as you would use celery, and the leaves to use as an herb (they are especially good for seasoning fish), in salad, or as a garnish. Wash the fennel bulb, and trim the base, but not so closely that the layers fall apart.

Baking: Cut small fennel bulbs in half lengthwise, quarter larger bulbs. Saute in a small amount of olive oil in an ovenproof skillet for five minutes. Add enough cooking liquid to moisten. Cover tightly and bake in a 350°F oven until just tender and beginning to brown. If desired, uncover the baking dish toward the end of the cooking time, to allow any excess liquid to evaporate, then sprinkle the fennel with breadcrumbs and grated Parmesan, and brown under the broiler before serving. Cooking time: about 35 minutes.

If you prefer, cut bulbs as suggested above. Place on a sheet of aluminum foil large enough to overwrap the fennel. Add 2 sliced cloves garlic, 1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary, and 2 teaspoons olive oil. Wrap tightly and place on a jelly-roll pan. Cooking time: about 35 minutes.

Braising: Place fennel slices, or halved or quartered small fennel bulbs, in a saucepan and add just enough boiling liquid to barely cover the vegetable. You can use a variety of braising liquids: broth, tomato sauce, or wine (diluted in a one-to-one ratio with water); add lemon zest, garlic, or onion for extra flavor. Simmer uncovered, turning occasionally, until the fennel is tender, adding more liquid if necessary. Braised fennel is delicious hot, warm, or chilled. Cooking time: 15 to 20 minutes.

Sauteing: Cut fennel into slivers and saute in a small amount of olive oil until crisp-tender. Add a small amount of stock, tossing and stirring the fennel frequently until tender. For extra flavor, cook chopped onion and garlic along with fennel. A sprinkling of lemon juice and zest makes a nice finishing touch. Cooking time: 10 to 15 minutes.

Steaming: Fennel steamed until crisp-tender can be covered with your favorite sauce or marinated in a vinaigrette, chilled, and served as a salad. To steam it, place sliced or cubed fennel in a vegetable steamer and cook over boiling water until just tender. Cooking time: 15 minutes.

Raw: To use fennel in salads, thinly slice and toss with a sprightly lemon dressing or the dressing of your choice. If you like, serve with a sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese.

Source: www.wholehealthmd.com

Orange and Fennel Salad

Many recipes pair the flavors of fennel and oranges. This is one of the simpler ones.

- 1 fennel bulb
- 3 oranges
- 1/8 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp sea salt, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
- 1/4 cup Nicoise olives, pitted

(Orange and Fennel Salad, Cont'd)

Trim the fennel bulb and wash well. Slice it thinly across the width of the bulb. Peel the oranges and break them into segments, removing seeds if possible. Place the fennel, oranges, and olive oil in a bowl and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper, if necessary. Garnish with pitted olives. Serves 4.

Source: Greensgrow Farms, www.greengrow.org

Roast Chicken Stuffed with Fennel and Garlic

"Potatoes roasted with olive oil and chopped fresh rosemary are a nice accompaniment. What to drink: Poggio del Sasso."

- 1-2 fresh fennel bulbs, trimmed, each cut into 8 wedges
- 1 T plus 1/8 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 tablespoons fennel seeds,
coarsely crushed in resealable plastic bag
- 1 T chopped fresh thyme
- 1 T chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 T chopped fresh tarragon
- 1 T chopped fresh marjoram
- 1/3 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 3-lb. whole chicken
- 1 lemon, halved
- 1/2 cup Vernaccia di San Gimignano wine
or other dry white wine
- 1/6 cup low-salt chicken broth

Cook fennel in large pot of boiling salted water until tender when pierced with knife, about 8 minutes. Drain. Transfer to bowl. Mix in 1 T oil; garlic; 1/2 T each fennel seeds, thyme, rosemary, tarragon, and marjoram; then salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Mix remaining 1/2 T each fennel seeds and herbs in small bowl. Rinse chicken inside and out; pat dry. Rub chicken inside and out with lemon halves, squeezing some of juice into the cavity. Rub outside of chickens with 1/8 cup oil, then fennel seed mixture. Sprinkle chickens generously with salt and pepper. Loosely stuff chickens with some of fresh fennel mixture. Tie legs together. Place chicken, breast side down, in large roasting pan. Arrange remaining fresh fennel mixture around chickens.

Roast chicken 30 minutes, basting occasionally with pan juices. Combine wine and broth and pour over chicken. Roast 15 minutes. Turn chicken breast side up. Roast chicken until juices run clear when pierced with fork in thickest part of thigh, about 40 minutes longer. Transfer chicken and fennel mixture to platter. Pour pan juices into bowl; skim off fat. Pour juices over chicken and serve.

Submitted by Nicole Hanley

Source: *Bon Appetit*, October 2003

More Leafy Veggie Tips!

Submitted by Joanne Martin

How to Store Salad Greens

The best way to keep the lettuce is to cut the bottom of the stalk and let the leaves fall free. Wash them in a cold water bath, drain and repeat if the water is dirty. Spin, dab or shake the leaves dry and store in the refrigerator in a bag.

Lettuce/Cabbage/Greens Tips

Another use for lettuce -- in a Veggie Smoothie!

Take a cup of water, 8 ice cubes [about 1oz] and a fresh lettuce or cabbage leaves with maybe a stalk of celery in the blender. Adjust veggie amounts to your taste. Watch out for the red or orange veggies because they will give your drink a funny color.

... Or for soups!

Greens can also be used in pureed soups: 4 cups stock, 1 cup shredded veggie, cook till veggies are done [15/20 min], then put through blender. This mixture can be chilled and used as a cold soup or heated with an equal volume of milk for a creamed soup.



Beet Fun Facts:

Beets are notable for their sweetness--they have the highest sugar content of any vegetable, but they are very low in calories. Fresh beets have twice the folate (folic acid) and potassium, and have a distinctive flavor and a crisp texture not found in canned beets. Fresh beets also supply a nutritional bonus--their green tops are an excellent source of beta-carotene, calcium, and iron.

The beets we eat as a vegetable (also called red beets, root beets, and table beets) are a root vegetable with two parts, the root and the edible green leaves. In ancient civilizations, only the green leaves of the beet plant were eaten; the roots--which did not look like modern beets--were used medicinally to treat headaches and toothaches. Beets with good-sized, rounded roots, like those we eat today, were probably developed in the sixteenth century, though it took another 200 years before they gained any popularity as a food.

Russian Potato Salad (with Fresh Beets)

2 potatoes
2 carrots
2 beets
½ cup peas

(You can double the quantity for larger serving size)

Boil all the vegetables, and chop into small cubes. Add salt, black pepper and mayonnaise to taste. Delicious hot or cold.

Submitted by Sandra Lobo Jost

Accumulating summer squash? Bake...

Zucchini Breads

Tanya Greene writes, "Here are two zucchini bread recipes for the newsletter -- one is a dessert-type version and the other is spicier and more 'bready'."

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Sweet Zucchini (Squash) Bread

2 cups shredded raw zucchini (or summer squash)
3 eggs
1 ¾ cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups flour
¼ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup chopped walnuts

Put zucchini in strainer and press or squeeze with hands to get excess liquid out. Beat eggs, sugar, and oil together. Add flour, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, salt, vanilla, and walnuts. Mix together by hand. Add drained zucchini. Mix well. Pour into 2 greased and floured loaf pans. Bake 55 to 65 minutes at 350°, or until a wooden pick or cake tester inserted in center comes out with very little cake clinging to it.

Savory Zucchini (Squash) Bread

1 cup flour
½ tsp baking powder
1 small onion -- finely chopped
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon seasoned salt
½ teaspoon oregano
½ cup Parmesan cheese
red pepper or Tabasco
2 tablespoons parsley -- chopped
1 clove garlic -- crushed
½ cup vegetable oil
4 eggs -- slightly beaten
3 cups zucchini (or summer squash) -- thinly sliced or shredded, and drained

Mix all ingredients, adding zucchini last after other ingredients are well mixed.

Bake zucchini bread at 350F for 25 minutes in a greased 13x9x2-inch pan. Test with clean, dry knife, for doneness -- it may take longer than 25 minutes to cook.

Submitted by Tanya Greene