

RIPLEY FARM

Eugene and Mary Margaret Ripley
62 Merrills Mills Rd
Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426
207-564-0563

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Dear Members,

Well, it's been a hot week on the farm and everything is just growing so fast. Our baby chicks have at least doubled in size since last week and are going to get moved up to a bigger coop any day now, and our crops seem to be growing just as quickly. The peas are at peak right now and you'll find a bag each of snap peas and snow peas in the share. You are also receiving carrots, bunching onions, head lettuce, mesclun mix (spring mix), and bok choy in this week's share.

The snow peas are a variety called Oregon Giant. They are the big, flattish peas in the share. Like the snap peas, you use the whole pod (other than the stem). The Oregon Giants are different than many snow peas in that they are ripe and at maximum flavor and sweetness only when the peas in the pods have swollen up (and sometimes the whole pod will be swollen). If they look different than what you think of as a snow pea, don't worry; they're not overripe or gone by. And if you've had them before, then you know that they are one of the sweetest, best-tasting peas there are. Use them raw in salads, steamed with butter, or as an excellent addition to a stir fry (see below).

The bag of baby-leaf greens in the share is mesclun (literally; 'mixture'), a diverse mix of different lettuce varieties and other salad greens cut young at their most tender and succulent stage. The diversity of ingredients and flavors in our mesclun makes it a great stand-alone salad of bite-size leaves. Just dress and serve.

There are two heads of bok choy in your share. These are an asian vegetable that is wonderful stir-fried. The stalks are crisp and juicy and the leaves have a nice mild flavor. When I was in college I studied abroad for one semester in Thailand. Stir-fried greens were a regularly eaten dish there and they were prepared similarly to the following recipe:

Heat 1-2 tbs of your favorite cooking oil in a skillet. Chop half a bunch of bunching onions (bulbs and tops) and stir-fry the bulb part for 3-5 minutes until they start to soften. Add about a two dozen Oregon Giant snow peas chopped into bite-size pieces and 1-2 tsp of minced ginger and cook another 1-2 minutes. Add the chopped *stalks* of two bok choys and cook another 1-2 minutes. Add the chopped bunching onion tops, chopped bok choy leaves, 1-2 cloves minced garlic and ¼ to ½ tsp red chili flakes and stir-fry just until the bok choy leaves wilt down. Remove from heat. Over the stir-fry, pour this dressing: 3-4 tbs olive oil, 1 tbs cider vinegar (or lemon/lime juice), and 1 tbs naturally fermented soy sauce. Serves 4-6.

One thing I forgot to mention last week is storage of the vegetables. We put everything in plastic bags because they keep *much* better that way in your fridge, because they don't get dried out and wilt down so quickly. Most veggies (including everything in this week's share) keep best in the fridge, but later in the season there will be some items that do better at room temperature. We'll let you know what those are when we give them. Every item we give should last in nice condition for at least one week with proper storage. Besides keeping them in their plastic bags, the other important thing is not to crush anything by trying to jam it in somewhere where there isn't room. If you ever have any questions about what to do with something (or anything else), please don't hesitate to call us.

Have a good week!