



Boánn's Banks

Sustainable Agriculture Along the Broad River

May 11, 2002

This Week at Market

- Lettuce "Rouge de Grenoblouse" and "New York Head"
- Mesclun Salad Mix
- Mustard "Purple Wave", "Tatsoi", and "Osaka Purple"
- Arugula
- Chinese Cabbage "China Choy"
- Mountain Spinach "Ruby Orach"
- Spinach "Viroflay"
- Lambs' Quarters
- Turnip Greens
- Edible Broccoli flowers
- Beet Greens

All items \$3/basket.

Gnocchi de Comède

- 1 cup cooked Orach (or spinach), chopped and well-drained
- 2 cups hot mashed potatoes
- 2 cups flour
- 1 T salt
- Basic Tomato Pasta Sauce
- Parmesan cheese

Put flour in mound on a bread board. Make a well in the center. Add Orach, potato, and flour. Mix with fingers until well blended. Divide dough into six equal sections and roll each out on floured board into a cylinder, about a half-inch thick. Cut each roll into pieces about a half inch long. Slightly indent each piece with your thumb.

Bring sauce to gentle boil in saucepan. Add gnocchi, stirring gently, and cook until gnocchi rise to the top. Remove gnocchi, place in serving dish, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, and pour sauce back over them. Serve hot.



Hello! Last week's market, our first, saw more inches of rain than vegetable eaters, I think. As I write this, the forecast is for another rainy market day. Our plants welcome the rain, and if we get a little wet bringing them to you, so be it.

Our farm is located just inside Franklin County along the middle fork of the Broad River. We grow a large variety of vegetables, almost entirely heirloom or open pollinated varieties. Like many things in our increasingly homogenous world, thousands of beautiful and delicious varieties of vegetables face extinction. One of our goals is to find some of those threatened varieties that both grow well in this area and make worthwhile additions to your kitchen and bring them to you. Ruby Orach, this week's featured vegetable, is one such variety.

We've begun planting the summer vegetables this past week. Of course there will be lots of tomatoes, but also beans, cucumbers, okra, plenty of peppers, eggplant, and so forth. We're entering the "Maymester" of farming, that period when the spring plants are starting to fade, but the summer plants aren't yet ready.

The baby chickens have gone through a growth spurt. The other day the new flock and the old flock, up until now keeping apart, intermingled in the back yard. I had a hard time telling the two age groups apart. This means a flood of eggs isn't too far away, maybe six weeks or so.

Thanks for coming to market this week. Eat well!

-- Chris and Eric Wagoner
www.boannsbanks.com

Featured Vegetable

This week's featured vegetable is the rare Ruby Orach, also known as Mountain Spinach or Butter Leaf, *Atriplex hortensis*. Like the Lambs' Quarters of last week, Orach is in the same botanical family as "regular" spinach, *Chenopodiaceae*. Orach is one of the oldest cultivated plants, native to parts of Europe and Siberia. The name is from the French *arroche*, which is in turn corrupted from the Latin *aurago*, or "golden herb". Early French settlers brought it to North America, where it can sometimes be found growing wild.

Besides being used as a substitute for spinach or added to salad, Orach has a long history as a medicinal. Mixed with honey, salt, and vinegar, it was used for gout. Leaves were crushed and held against sore throats. A blend of seeds and wine was used for jaundice. Also, it is traditionally cooked with garden sorrel (also grown by us), complementing sorrel's lemony acidity.

Orach was once common, but is now very rare, a victim of decreasing diversity in the world's gardens.