



TUV HASHAVUA

BEST OF THE WEEK

Purslane: Research and Reminiscence

Naomi Danis and Maki Hoashi, Members, Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA

**MANY THANKS
TO OUR
VOLUNTEERS !**

TUESDAY 10/13
[Week #21 – A]

5-8pm Pick-up

Doria Kalt

Melnie Topol

Mike Katz

1:00 pm Truck Unloading

Joanna Gallai

Brian Gardner Hoashi

8pm Unclaimed Shares

Farah Diaz-Tello

TUESDAY 10/20
[Week #22 – B]

5-8pm Pick-up

Alissa Harris

Tabia Heywot

Laura Marks

1:00 pm Truck Unloading

Joanna Gallai

Valeria Vavassori-Chen

8pm Unclaimed Shares

Takashi Yoneta

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tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
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goldenearthworm.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

The weather has definitely turned now, and memories of heat-loving purslane are behind us. I first learned of this herb/vegetable when a bundle of it showed up in the CSA box. A friend pointed me to recipes from her native Istanbul, calling it semizotu; others said it was wonderful cooked up with scrambled eggs and grated tomatoes (a new technique for processing tomatoes, too!). Young, tender leaves and stems are reserved for salads; bulkier bunches can lighten heavy stews.

My favorite purslane story is about Pirpirim Asi – an Anatolian stew of lentils and lamb which gets its distinctive savor from purslane, as told by cookbook writer Paula Wolfert (paula-wolfert.com): “In America, grandmothers spoil their grandchildren with sweets; in Gaziantep, grandmothers use pirpirim asi. The story goes that Turkish cops will stop writing traffic tickets if the violator promises to bring them a freshly cooked pot. Purslane is the key to the stew's special flavor. Americans often refer to purslane as ‘that nuisance weed,’ the one that crops up in gardens, window boxes, sometimes even in the middle of gravel driveways. But to knowledgeable cooks, it is no nuisance! With its mild lemony taste and crisp-plump texture, it is a wonderful-tasting fresh green, of which there are precious few in late summer. If you don't have a garden and don't know where or how to forage for purslane, ask an organic grower at your local farmers' market to pick some for you. Perhaps you could even tempt the grower with a pot of stew.”

*Then there was the summer I made lots of leafy vegetable pies – the CSA farm was prolific about sending us swiss chard, herbs, kale of many types, turnip and beet tops, etc. I learned that chopping purslane into a spanakopita gave it substance and a more interesting flavor. And I discovered that my mother – the farmgirl who knew which weeds to harvest in Queens to flavor and stretch out our meals – had never known about purslane! I needed to learn more about this weed/herb. Fortunately, CSA member **Naomi Danis** submitted a short article for our newsletter with her research on this subject:*

It's good our Forest Hills Jewish Center Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA sends out an email each week listing what's in the box, and a newsletter. I wouldn't have known otherwise to recognize purslane. I remember being pleasantly surprised last year. This year I took some out to my garden and was able to match the leaves to what I had assumed were weeds growing among my intentional plantings. No more thinking of purslane as a weed. I now treasure it. And it has a respected place in my survivalist fantasies.

Here's what Maggie, our CSA farmer at Golden Earthworm Organic Farm, had to say when I asked her about purslane.

“The purslane we harvest grows freely in our fields. The plant is delicious and has great health benefits. When enough of it is growing well in one of our fields, we save it and let it take over the field so we can harvest it for the CSA. The fact that it has high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids IN A PLANT is pretty extraordinary. It also thrives well without too much water, as it stores it in its leaves, much like other succulent plants – it loves the heat. I like to eat it raw in a salad with a little lemon juice, olive oil, salt and shaved parmesan cheese. This might be the most unusual ‘crop’ we grow in terms of its nutrients and flavor in a green leaf.”

My son treasures all the edible weeds that get into the CSA delivery; I save them for him and he consumes them on the spot (probably so his wife doesn't have the opportunity to make fun of him)!

- Judith Mermelstein,
CSA Member

Susan Mahr has written a good description of purslane on the Wisconsin Master Gardener Website (wimastergardener.org): "*Portulaca oleracea* is a low-growing plant with succulent leaves. This annual grows quickly to produce a mat of tart-flavored, edible leaves. Because of its fast growth, prolific seed production, and ability to survive in all types of soils, most people think of it as a pest, but some consider it a vegetable."

On the Internet, I found interesting facts: Ghandi is said to have eaten purslane, and he called it *Luni*. Some say it originated in India, although it is a global plant now. It's called *pourpier* in France and *verdolaga* in Mexico. In Hebrew it is known as *regelah* from the word for foot, probably because it grows underfoot, close to the ground.

Purslane was considered a common food in the U.S. until a few generations or so ago. With renewed interest in foraging for food, and because it grows almost anywhere – though generally preferring sunny weather over shade or areas that are too damp – purslane seems to be making a comeback.

Clotilde Dusoulier, author of *The French Market Cookbook: Vegetarian Recipes* has a comprehensive article on purslane, *45 Things to Do with Purslane*, on the website, chocolateandzucchini.com.

"And if you ever tire of it," recommends Dusoulier, "feed it to your chickens! Their eggs will be richer in omega-3 fatty acids."

Naomi Danis is the managing editor of *Lilith* magazine, independent, Jewish and frankly feminist (www.Lilith.org) and the author of "It's Tot Shabbat," "Splish-Splash" and "Walk With Me." She is an avid composter, cultivates perennial red and black currants, blueberries, asparagus and rhubarb in her garden, and is working on having her Ascan Avenue front lawn be taken over by wild strawberries. She thanks the FHJC Tw Ha'Aretz CSA for introducing her to swiss chard, which she now grows, too.

WINTER CSA SHARE SIGN-UP IS COMING!
Golden Earthworm Organic Farm is offering a winter share again.
There will be 3 Tuesday pick-ups: 12/1, 12/15, and 1/5.
ALSO COMING:
* Fruit, Grain, Bean, Flour add-on shares
* Separate Coffee, Tea, Chocolate share
WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR DETAILS!

PLEASE SHARE YOUR SPARE PLASTIC BAGS!

WHAT'S IN THE BOX??
Leeks, Russet Potatoes, Toscano Kale, Carrots, Radicchio
FRUIT: Bosc Pears and Apples (Red/Golden Delicious and/or Macoun)

ALSATIAN POTATO AND LEEK TART

marthastewart.com | Serves 6

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| 1 1/2 lbs potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch-thick rounds (about 3 large potatoes) | 2 tbsp unsalted butter |
| coarse salt, to taste | 1 medium leek, white and light-green parts, chopped |
| ground pepper, to taste | 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley |
| 1 cup heavy cream, plus 1 tbsp for glaze | 1 large egg yolk |
| 5 cloves garlic, crushed | 1 pkg (14 ounces) frozen puff pastry, thawed |
| 1/2 tsp grated nutmeg | flour, for work surface |
| | 1 1/2 cups grated Gruyere |

Cover potatoes with water in saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Add a pinch of salt; cook until just tender, 15 min. Drain, cool.

Bring garlic, nutmeg, and 1 cup cream to a simmer in a small pot over medium-high heat. Reduce volume by half. Season with salt and pepper; set aside.

Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add leeks; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 min. Remove from heat. Stir in parsley; season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 400°. Make eggwash by whisking egg yolk and remaining 1 tbsp cream together in a small bowl; set aside.

Divide puff pastry on a lightly floured surface into two 6-by-13-inch rectangles. Set 1 rectangle on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Add half of the potatoes, leaving a 1/2-inch border all around and overlapping potatoes slightly. Top with half of the leek mixture and 3/4 cup cheese; season with salt and pepper. Repeat layering with remaining potatoes, leeks, and cheese. Brush edges of dough with egg wash. Cover with remaining dough rectangle; gently press edges with a fork to seal. Cut 2-inch slits lengthwise in center of crust, 2 inches apart. Brush with egg wash. Refrigerate on baking sheet until cold, about 30 min.

Bake pie until golden brown and puffy, about 35 min. Remove from oven and pour cream mixture into pie vents with a funnel. Bake 10 min more. Let stand 15 min before serving.

KALE, RADICCHIO, CARROT SLAW w/ PUMPKIN SEED PESTO *pccnaturalmarkets.com* | Serves 6

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| 1 large bunch lacinato kale, de-stemmed, sliced cross-wise into 1/4 inch strips (about 3 cups) | PUMPKIN SEED PESTO: |
| 1 head radicchio, cored and torn into pieces (about 1 cup) | 1/2 cup hulled raw squash seeds |
| 1 cup shredded carrots | 2 cloves garlic, peeled |
| Pumpkin Seed Pesto | 2 tsp lemon juice |
| | 2 tsp brown rice miso paste |
| | 2 cups chopped fresh basil |
| | 1/2 to 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil |
| | Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste |

Combine kale, radicchio and carrots in a large bowl. Toss to coat with Pumpkin Seed Pesto. Serve immediately.

PUMPKIN SEED PESTO: Place squash seeds and garlic in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides, if necessary. Add lemon juice, miso paste and basil leaves; pulse until blended. Slowly drizzle in olive oil while the machine is running. Season to taste with salt and pepper.