

Published Thursday, May 8, 2008 4:12 AM PDT

Commentary

Around town: The beets are coming

By Anita Susan Brenner

Last week's column was more than a shameless plug for Rabbi Jonathan Bernhard's unofficial Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. It was an honest attempt to collect recipes for beets.

To recap, Community Supported Agriculture refers to city folks committing to purchase seasonal produce from a farm. Our farm is Tierra Miguel in the Pauma Valley. If all goes well, every two weeks, we receive a "plentiful mix of greens, vegetables and fruit." But if the crop gets eaten by locusts, we get nothing.

It is unclear whether the farm will send us beets. Of quintessential importance is the ability to be prepared to prepare interesting yet delicious meals from the anticipated bounty.

What if they send us beets?

I worry about beets. Beets are a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin C, and other essential elements. They contain a purple pigment known as betacyanin, which may or may have health benefits.

Whatever.

Beets are a transitional crop. Am I prepared for transition? For 50 pounds of beets?

Now a wonderful friend responds. Her name is Joanne. She sends me an out-of-print copy of "The Balkan Cookbook" by Inge Kramarz.

An unusual cookbook. *Sui generis*. Amid the recipes for Stuffed Bear Paws ("With a sharp knife remove hairs and thick skin from paws...") and Four Meats with Vegetables ("1/2 pound pork, 1/2 pound fat beef, 1/2 pound mutton, 1 calf's foot..."), I find the recipe for Beets with Horseradish:

2 pounds beets

1 fresh horseradish (15 inches long) grated

2 cups water

1 cup vinegar

2 tablespoons salt.

(So far, so good. I will multiply the ingredients by 25. There goes 50 pounds of beets.)

Cook beets; peel and slice.

In large glasses alternate layers of beet slices with horseradish.

Boil a strong brine of vinegar, salt and water and, while still hot, pour over the beets. When cooled, seal with paraffin and store in a cool place.

Cool place? La Cañada Flintridge? In the summer? Large glasses? Paraffin?

I must reconsider.

Now I remember Mark Bittman, the great post-Medieval food commentator. Didn't Bittman have a recipe for Beet Rosti with rosemary?

ANITA SUSAN BRENNER awaits her first batch of vegetables. She invites readers to go to www.anitabrenner.com for a link to Mark Bittman's Beet Rosti recipe.

[[CLOSE WINDOW](#)]