I understand it was Buddha who said, “When you can see 100 shades of Green, you have truly reached heaven.” I also understand that in this early season, as much as we want to deliver a variety of produce, what grows well and what is being delivered makes you feel you have “reached heaven”. I walked the farm some today and took in the array of produce beginning to explode into life. Tomatoes in small pale balls, squash flowers pretty enough to photograph and little fruits all starting to swell into ripeness. Non-the-less this week it’s a great deal of greens.

That being said I have a lot of respect for ‘green’. At one point in my past I needed to lose some weight and gain some health back. After researching I found opinions thinking greens, of one sort or another, should be the base of the food triangle. “We eat leafy greens”. So, I did. Cut out all fat and animal products and started sucking up some greens, breakfast-lunch-and dinner. Tough at first! It took some time to gain a respect for the taste of my new meals and to learn how to prepare them in ways I liked. However after the first three months my triglycerides dropped 200 points (260—60) and I began to see the magic of green. I lost about 40 pounds off my body and 10 years off my face. All because of green. It’s not hard to find research on line that calls greens, “the most concentrated source of nutrition of any food”. And that’s the goal. We don’t eat for volume; we eat for nutrients thus terms such as ‘empty calories’ (consumed calories with no nutritional value). For example a little bit of gas will fuel your car better then 100 gallons of lemon aid. Our bodies need fuel and its specific fuel.

We added these greens as the base to fruit shakes, added them to black beans and rice (black green and rice as it became), put our chili over them instead of rice and more. I also added green to my diet in the form of walks and hikes. Daily escapes to fresh air and nature on our mountain. Every time we go back to Virginia the first thing out of my boys mouth is, “its so green!!!” Green walks, fresh air and healthy food were the base to my personal turn around.

Johnny Cash wrote a song 40 Shades of Green. It was a song based in the green Appalachian influences of the area of that music about the green hills of Irish ancestors. However, I suspect Buddha and Cash weren’t just talking about greens we see. It’s much more multi-dimensional then that. We see green - we also smell it, feel it, hear it and best of all taste it. Green is our connection to health.
RUSSIAN GAZPACHO AC’ROSHKA

INGREDIENTS
• 3 cups plain kefir, try to get one that was produced recently, so it will be less sour
• 3 cups sparkling water
• juice of 1 lemon or 2 tbs vinegar, skip if you are using whey
• 1 cup finely chopped scallions
• 1/4 cup finely chopped dill
• 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley
• 1 bunch radishes, cut in half and thinly sliced
• 1 cucumber, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch dice
• 4 hard-boiled large eggs, diced
• 3 medium size boiled red potatoes, diced
• Salt and pepper to taste
• 1 tsp Horseradish
• 1 tsp mustard (Russian mustard adds a kick)

DIRECTIONS
- Dissolve horseradish and mustard in a little bit of kefir. Set aside
- Get your mortar and pestle out and pound scallions, dill and cilantro with a few large pinches of salt until the aroma of the herbs reaches your nose. Don't turn the herbs into a paste though
- In a large soup pot, combine diced boiled potatoes with the herb mixture. Mix well, even crush a little to incorporate herbs into the potatoes
- Add the rest of the ingredients: horseradish and mustard mixture, eggs, cucumber, radish, kefir, and lemon juice. Gently mix
- Taste for salt. Add more if necessary
- Add cold sparkling water right before you serve it.

But honestly, there are hundreds of varieties of this soup. Almost every cook has their own ingredients and proportions. So you can freely change the recipe up to your taste. For instance, you can add boiled chopped carrots or change parsley for cilantro. Meat lovers can add some chopped sausage. You can skip the horseradish and mustard part (which I never use). Enjoy the recipe and find your own taste of Russian Ac’roshka.

The recipe was adapted from http://cuceesprouts.com/2012/08/russian-gazpacho-okroshka/

KITCHEN TIP
Never put citrus fruits or tomatoes in the fridge. The low temperatures degrade the aroma and flavor of these persnickety fruits.

For more recipes please visit our website at http://augardens.com/recipes/

Free Range Eggs Free Range Eggs are available for $3.00 from Redbarn Farm in Buchanan, MI. To order eggs for your next delivery please email <info@augardens.com>

Local Pickup Our normal pick-up location is at our Student Gardens stand nearby Neighbor-to-Neighbor. Local-pick up’s are available on Fridays between 11:00am-2:00pm.