



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 14, 2012

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Broccoli: Imperial

Cantaloupe: Halona

Carrots: Yaya, Mokum, or Napoli

Delicious for cooking or baking - check out the carrot waffle recipe from the Week 9 Newsletter.

Cilantro: Santo

Cucumber: Marketmore or General Lee

Eggplant: Listada, Pingtung Long, Nadia, or Black Beauty

Onions: Cortland or Copra

After a couple of weeks in the greenhouse, these onions will be cured, but for right now they are fresh and should be stored in the refrigerator. This is a great week for fajitas. Saute thin slices of peppers and onions in olive oil and serve in wraps with rice, ground beef or pork, salsa and sour cream.

Parsley: Italian

Parsley is great as a garnish for many dishes, especially potatoes. Try out the Baba Ganouj recipe from the newsletter.

Peppers: Green Bell or Sweet Italian

If you have these in your box, the small slender peppers look like hot peppers, but they are a sweet Italian heirloom variety called Jimmy Nardello brought to the U.S. by an Italian immigrant in the 1880's.

Hot Pepper: Jalapeno

This is the small green pepper in your box (medium hot). Try in fresh salsa (chopped tomatoes, peppers, jalapeno, onions, cilantro, salt and pepper). Some folks are sensitive to the heat in jalapenos so you might want to wear gloves when cutting these up.

Potatoes: Red Norland and Adirondack Blue

These blue potatoes are rich with iron, vitamin C and antioxidants. We love potatoes roasted in the oven. Cube, toss in olive oil and season with salt, and pepper. Spread on a baking pan. Roast in a 400 degree oven until tender and browned (turn occasionally). Garnish with parsley.

Summer Squash: Dunja, Zephyr, Raven, or Success

Cherry Tomatoes

Slicing Tomatoes: New Girl, Medford, Pink Beauty, Big Beef, San Marzano, Jaune Flamee, Amish Paste, Brandywine, or Indigo Rose

This is a good time to make fresh salsa. We usually chop up tomato, peppers, onions, some jalapeno, garlic, salt and pepper and let it sit a bit to let the flavors marry. The fresh cilantro this week would be a nice addition.

Watermelon: Starlight (Red), Sunshine (Yellow) or Blacktail Mountain (Red)

WEEK 10: ALLIUMS AND MELONS

The past weekend was all about alliums. We headed over to the Garlic Festival on Saturday in Hutchinson for some great food prepared by chefs from a few fabulous Twin Cities eateries. There were also many vendors of fine foods, cooking demos, music, and fun activities for kids. Garlic vendors were slight this year due to this season's influx of leafhopper disease but the garlic ice cream from Morning Star creamery still made its famous appearance.

We started harvesting onions last week and with the impending rain on Saturday night, we did the onion harvest dash and pulled the last of the crop in at 8:00pm that night. After that, we still had to pull drip tape out of the rows and mow down those beds. We were able to make that happen thanks to the lights on the Ford tractor and by 9:45pm the onions were all safely laid out to cure in the greenhouse. With those jobs done, the sound of rain on Saturday night was a happy one. The patchwork pattern of red and yellow storage onions and green onion tops in the greenhouse is quite beautiful right now. Those onions will be making their way into your boxes throughout the rest of the share season.

The melons are coming in beautifully right now. They are one crop that actually appreciated the dry weather we had earlier in the season. Watermelons are a plant that can thrive in dry weather, which seems a little counter-intuitive. They were thought to have originated in southern Africa where, in some semi-arid regions, they are still an important food crop for water storage. The plants are very efficient at seeking out water and a drier season, like we have been having, actually helps prevent fungal diseases that can damage a crop. We hope you enjoy the sweetness they bring to this time of year.

SOME EVENTS TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR:

September 15th, Hoedown at York Farm

Our friends Andy and Irene, who own York Farm in Hutchinson, are hosting a hoe down to celebrate putting our "hoes down". There will be a potluck, barn dance with square dance calling by Shake These Bones and guests, a bonfire and community. This is a Zero Waste event so bring your own plates and utensils! RSVP to let Irene know if you are coming to help them plan out numbers for the event. Email: igenelin@gmail.com or Irene's cell: 612-968-6498

September 29th, Share Member Potluck at the Farm!

Top Ten Share Member Potluck Countdown (more to come each week):

Number 10: For those that don't know, learn the Viking lawn game Kubb. For those that do know, bring your baton tossing arm and play.

Number 9: Guess the correct weight of the giant summer squash and win a Prairie Drifter prize!

Number 8: Feed the happy chickens. Make a fowl best friend by flinging tomatoes over the fence.

-Best wishes from your farmers,
Joan, Nick, and Abe

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0.31"

High Temp: 78°F

Low Temp: 58°F

Sightings: A pair of trumpeter swans calling to each other. We now understand how they got their name!

Additional shares available during the next few weeks:
Pesto Share, Greens Share, Storage Tomato Share

HOW TO STORE YOUR PRODUCE

All of your produce this week can be stored in the refrigerator in plastic bags, except for those noted below. If you have room in your vegetable drawers, that's great. If not, they will be fine in the main refrigerator. Some additional info . . .

Eggplant: Does not like refrigeration. Store in a dark, cool place and use within a couple of days. Eggplant can NOT be eaten raw - you must cook before eating.

Tomatoes: Do not refrigerate. Best to take out of the plastic bag.

Potatoes: Do not refrigerate.

PRESERVING TIPS

- **Broccoli:** Wash and remove leaves. Separate heads into convenient-size sections. You can also freeze small stem pieces. Wash well. Blanch in boiling water for 3-4 minutes. Cool, drain, and pack into freezer bags. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Tomatoes:** If you don't want to use all of your tomatoes now, chop them up, place in Ziploc freezer bags, flatten and freeze. Do not overfill bags or they will be a little more challenging to use later. Great for soups, sauces or chili.

Baba Ganouj

Adapted from "Moosewood Cookbook"
This is a Middle Eastern eggplant dip that is one of our favorite ways to prepare eggplant.

1-2 eggplant (globe eggplant are best for this recipe)
2-4 cloves garlic, minced
2 T. lemon juice
2 T. tahini (this is sesame seed butter, you can omit if you choose)
1 t. salt
1-2 T. fresh parsley, chopped
Black pepper or cayenne, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice eggplant in half lengthwise and place face down on oiled baking sheet. Bake for 45-60 minutes or until very tender. Scoop out eggplant pulp, discard skin. Place pulp in food processor or blender, add remaining ingredients, and blend until smooth. If you don't have a blender or food processor, you can also mash the ingredients together by hand and leave slightly chunky. Adjust lemon juice and seasonings as desired. This is delicious on crusty bread or crackers. Also, try serving over pita bread wedges topped with quartered cherry tomatoes, black olives and feta. So tasty!

RECIPES

A Spin on Colcannon

This is traditionally made with cabbage but you can use broccoli as a tasty twist. This is also fantastic with kale so save this recipe for later in the season when there is kale or cabbage in your share. Great side dish for any meat or even with brats and burgers.

1 ½ lb. potatoes
3 c. broccoli, separated into small florets
1- 1 ½ c. onion, chopped
¼ c. milk or non-dairy alternative
2 T. butter or Earth balance
¾ c. grated cheese (optional if you can't do dairy)
Salt and pepper

Boil potatoes in water until tender. Drain, reserving cooking water. Boil broccoli and onion in the potato water for about 3-4 minutes. Drain vegetables. Mash potatoes with milk and butter. Season with salt and pepper. Stir broccoli and onion into potatoes, then add cheese and mix again. Reserve some cheese to sprinkle on top. Spread potatoes into a greased casserole, sprinkle on remaining cheese. Heat casserole through in a 350 degree oven until cheese on top is slightly brown.

Ratatouille Sandwiches

Adapted from "Living" magazine, makes 6 open face sandwiches
Ratatouille comes from the French word touiller which means "to toss" or "to stir". It was originally a poor farmer's dish, prepared in the summer with fresh summer vegetables. This dish has become quite popular, even with kids, since the 2007 Disney movie "Ratatouille" came out. Traditionally this is more of a stew but we also love it as an open face sandwich. You can also serve this without the egg and bread and instead over rice.

1 large eggplant, cut into ¾ inch chunks
Salt and pepper
2-4 tomatoes, cut into ¾ inch chunks
¼ c. plus 2 T. olive oil, plus more for brushing
2-3 T. chopped fresh basil or parsley
1 medium onion, halved and sliced ¼ inch thick
2-4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1-2 summer squash, cut into ¾ inch chunks
1-2 peppers, cut into ¾ inch chunks
6 slices rustic bread
6 eggs (fried or poached)

Place eggplant in colander. Season generously with salt, toss to coat, let drain for 30 minutes, rinse and pat dry. (You can skip this step if you don't have the extra 30 minutes. We often skip this and the dish is still fantastic). Toss tomatoes with 2 T. oil and fresh herbs in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss together eggplant, onion, garlic, and 2 T. oil in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Spread vegetables out into an even layer on a baking sheet. Toss zucchini and peppers in bowl with remaining 2 T. oil. Season with salt and pepper. Spread out into an even layer on the same baking sheet. Roast vegetables until golden and tender, about 45 minutes. Transfer veggies to tomato-herb mixture. Stir to combine. Brush slices of bread with oil. Lightly toast in oven. Poach or fry eggs. Spoon ratatouille over bread slices. Top with the egg and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired.

Balsamic Carrot Salad

Adapted from "Cooking Outside the Box"
3-5 carrots, grated
Splash of balsamic vinegar
Splash of olive oil
Small handful of toasted, sliced almonds
Small handful of raisins

Put grated carrots in a salad bowl and add the balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Sprinkle the almonds on top and sprinkle the raisins over them. Serve at room temperature.