



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Beets: Red Ace

We like to boil or roast all of our beets at once and then have them in the fridge to snack on or as a side for meals throughout the week.

Cauliflower: Fremont

Try with garlic brown butter. Add 1-3 T. butter to a saucepan with 1-2 cloves minced garlic. Heat on medium until butter starts to brown; remove from heat. Steam cauliflower lightly. Drizzle with garlic brown butter and a splash of lemon juice.

Carrots: Nectar or Negovia**Celery: Tango**

This celery is very different than what you will find in the grocery store. It is less watery and has more flavor. This celery is great for use in soups, chopped fine in casseroles or tomato sauce. Try diced finely in a shepherd's pie with carrots, cauliflower and ground beef, topped with mashed potatoes.

Cilantro: Santo

Enough for the tomatillos salsa or guacamole.

Eggplant: Listada, Nadia, or Black Beauty

Check out the Eggplant Chili recipe submitted by one of our members!

Fennel: Zefa Fino

Vegetable with the white bulb and dill-like fronds. Has a subtle flavor and aroma of anise.

Garlic: German Extra Hardy**Lettuce: Green Star or Concept****Onions: Cortland/Copra (Yellow) and Redwing (Red)****Peppers: Green/Colored Bell or Sweet Italian**

These are easily chopped up and frozen for use in soups, stir fries, frittatas, chili, etc. in the winter. Simply chop and place in Ziploc bags to freeze.

Hot Pepper: Jalapeno

This is the small green pepper in your box (medium hot). Some folks are sensitive to the heat in jalapenos so wear gloves when cutting these up.

Potatoes: Red Norland**Salad Mix: Allstar Gourmet****Tomatillos: Toma Verde**

Tomatillos are the tomato-like green fruit in papery husks. To use, remove the husk and wash well to remove the stickiness. Great in salsa verde.

Cherry Tomatoes**Slicing/Heirloom Tomatoes**

We separated the romas and small heirlooms from the slicers to prevent tomato sauce in your box!

WEEK 14: EAT WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN WHAT YOU CAN'T

That is what our friends in western Minnesota used to say around this time of year. We realize this is a busy time for many families with the start of school and it can be a more challenging time to cook with all of your share contents. We have included instructions for how to freeze many items from your share this week if you don't have time to make them into a full meal now. These veggies are a real treat in the wintertime. The pact around our house is to preserve at least two or three items per week so that the summer's bounty can follow us into winter. We never regret that time spent once the snow flies!

This week brought an exciting event to the farm. Our friend, Carol, from Litchfield keeps bees on the south edge of our vegetable fields. She is a new beekeeper and this was her second year raising bees at our farm. Last year, with the incredibly wet spring, was a hard one on the bee population and she was unable to harvest any honey. This year, the bees did very well and she just extracted honey from the hives, leaving ample golden sweetness for the bees to feast on over the winter. We really appreciated having her bees on the farm as they, along with other insects, are critical to pollinating our flowering and fruiting crops like melon, cucumber, tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, and winter squash to name a few.

The process of honey making is so fascinating, it is worth summarizing. So how do bees make honey? Honey bees collect pollen and nectar, using their proboscis to suck the nectar out of the flowers. They store it in their stomachs and carry it to the beehive. While inside the bee's stomach for about half an hour, the nectar mixes with the proteins and enzymes produced by the bees, converting the nectar into honey. The bees drop the honey into the beeswax comb and repeat the process until the combs are full. Finally, the bees fan their wings to evaporate and thicken the honey (nectar is 80% water and honey is about 14-18% water). When this is done, the bees cap the honeycomb with wax and move on to the next empty comb. Bees fly an average of 55,000 miles to produce one pound of honey. Thank you to our buzzing friends!

Additional Autumn Share:

At the end of October or the beginning of November we will be offering a one-time Autumn Share for approximately \$50 that will be filled with storage vegetables like winter squash, onions, carrots and beets along with dried herbs and other autumn flair. Most of these vegetables will be able to hold until Thanksgiving (and beyond) if you would like to use them for your holiday table. We will also include several of our favorite autumn recipes and dishes we love for Thanksgiving. There are a limited number of Autumn Shares available and will be offered on a first come-first served basis. Please let us know if you are interested and we will put your family on the list.

SOME EVENTS TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR:

September 15th, Hoedown at York Farm this Saturday!

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

You are welcome to come to the farm anytime after 3:00pm for play time, lawn games, walks around the farm, farm games, prizes and good conversation. We will start the potluck at 4:00pm with a bonfire to follow. What to bring: A dish to pass, lawn chairs, cups/plates/bowls/utensils (we will have a place to rinse dishes off).

Top Ten Share Member Potluck Countdown:

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.

Number 7: Go on a pumpkin-finding mission in the pumpkin patch.

Number 6: Feast on Joan's delicious ginger carrot soup.

Number 5: Gather your wits and go on a farm scavenger hunt.

Number 4: Enjoy the evening around a bonfire.

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

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0"

High Temp: 89°F

Low Temp: 44°F

Sightings: While Joan and Abe were cleaning onions in the greenhouse, a butterfly (we think a Painted Lady) landed on Joan's hand. We saw the butterfly roll its proboscis in and out - amazing!

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/Garlic: Do not refrigerate.

RECIPES TO CHECK OUT

- Kebabs with Lemon Herb Marinade from the Week 13 Newsletter (delicious with peppers, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, and cauliflower)
- Roasted Eggplant Pizza from the Week 13 Newsletter
- Salsa Verde from the Week 11 Newsletter or under Tomatillos in the recipe section of our website.
- Chocolate Beet Muffins from the Week 4 Newsletter
- Fennel Ideas from the Week 6 Newsletter
- Chicken Celery Stir Fry from Week 12 Newsletter

PRESERVING TIPS

- **Cauliflower:** 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:** Wash and core tomatoes. Chop (with or without skins), place in Ziploc freezer bags, flatten and freeze. Do not overfill. Great for soups, stews, sauces or chili. For a VERY fast freezing method, wash and core tomatoes, leave whole and freeze on a cookie sheet. Once frozen, pack into Ziploc bags, label and freeze. When you pull the tomatoes out to use, simply run warm tap water over the tomatoes to remove skins. We learned about this method from our friends at Loon Organics.
- **Celery:** Wash well, dice finely, place into Ziploc bags and freeze. These are great to pull out for casseroles, soups, and stews.
- **Tomatillos:** Remove papery husk, wash well, quarter and freeze in Ziploc bags.
- **Peppers:** Wash, remove stem and seeds. Either slice thinly or chop and freeze in Ziploc bags.

RECIPES

Black Bean Chili with Eggplant

Adapted from the Dean and Deluca website

One of our share members passed this recipe on to us - thanks Katie! Another great way to use eggplant. It adds a richness and depth to a traditional chili.

1 1/2 pounds eggplant, unpeeled, stemmed, and cut into 1-inch cubes
Salt for sprinkling the eggplant plus additional to taste
15 dried New Mexican red chilies, about 3 ounces (if you don't have access to these chilies, try using chili powder, tomato paste, and water to substitute for the chili paste)
3 c. water
1/4 c. extra-virgin olive oil
1 small red onion, finely minced
4 garlic cloves, minced
28-ounce can tomatoes, drained and chopped (could also use fresh tomatoes)
1/2 T. ground coriander
1/2 t. ground cumin
1 bay leaf
2 c. cooked black beans
Grated cheese

Place the eggplant cubes in a strainer and sprinkle generously with salt. Let stand for 30-60 minutes and pat dry with paper towels. Simmer the chilies and the 3 cups of water in a large saucepan for 20 minutes. Puree the chilies and the liquid, in batches, in a blender until very smooth. Force the puree through a fine sieve and discard any solid pieces. Heat the oil in a large, heavy Dutch oven or heavy soup pot over moderately high heat. Add eggplant and cook, stirring, until almost tender, about 4 minutes. Remove eggplant and set aside. Add onions and garlic to the same Dutch oven, adding more oil if necessary, and cook, stirring, for 4 minutes. Add tomatoes, ground coriander, cumin, bay leaf, eggplant, and chili purée, and simmer 5 minutes. Add beans, and simmer over moderate heat for 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Remove the bay leaf. Place in bowls and top with cheese if desired.

Braised Pork and Fennel Meatballs

Adapted from the HuffingtonPost.com

This is a delicious twist on meatballs. You could also use the "braise" as a marinara sauce for pasta, pizza or lasagna if you do not want to make meatballs.

1 lb. ground pork (could substitute ground beef)
3/4 t. salt
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 t. fennel seeds
1 t. red pepper flakes (optional)
1 T. vegetable oil
Braise:
2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely sliced
1/4 - 1/2 c. chopped onion
1/2 - 1 fennel bulb, trimmed and finely shaved
1/2 c. dry white wine (could just use water)
1 t. ground fennel (could substitute finely minced fennel fronds)
1 28 oz can crushed tomatoes, or equivalent chopped fresh tomatoes

Combine the pork, garlic, and fennel seeds in a large bowl and season with salt and red pepper flakes. Mix well then form into approximately 14 2-inch round meatballs. Set on a tray in the fridge to firm up while you prepare the braising sauce. In a large Dutch oven or heavy skillet, heat 2 T. olive oil. Add garlic, onion and fennel. Cook until onions and fennel are very tender and lightly caramelized, about 10-12 minutes. Season with salt and pepper then add ground fennel seeds or minced fennel fronds. Deglaze with white wine or water and pour in tomatoes. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer, covered for 15 minutes. Set a large saute pan over high heat and add vegetable oil. When very hot, brown meatballs all over, about 2-3 minutes per side. Use a slotted spoon to transfer meatballs to the Dutch oven or skillet and nestle them in sauce. Cover slightly with a lid and simmer for 10 minutes until very tender and meatballs are cooked fully through.

Tomatillo Guacamole

Adapted from the HuffingtonPost.com

This is delicious as a dip for chips, on quesadillas, or as a sauce for fish.

4 T. olive oil
2-3 garlic cloves, minced
1 jalapeno pepper
1/2 - 1 c. red onion finely chopped
2-4 tomatillos, finely chopped
Juice of 1 lime (could also use bottled lime or lemon juice)
2 avocados, peeled, pitted, and cubed
2 cilantro sprigs, chopped
Tabasco and salt to taste

Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic, 1/2 of the jalapeno, and red onion and sauté until onions are softened, about 4 minutes. Add the tomatillos and sauté until softened, another 3-4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Mix with the lime juice, avocado, cilantro, and remaining jalapeno. Mix until smooth. Serve immediately. Season with salt and Tabasco.