



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 18, 2012

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Broccoli or Romanesco

If you have romanesco in your box it is the pale green, spiky cousin to cauliflower. It is very delicious with almost a hint of a lemony flavor. You can use this as you would broccoli or cauliflower.

Carrots: Nectar or Negovia

Celeriac: Mars or Brilliant

The flavor of celeriac (or celery root) is much like mild celery and it bakes and cooks up much like a potato. To prepare celeriac, slice off the crown and peel with a sharp knife. Peeled celeriac darkens when exposed to air so peel just before using. It can be eaten raw in slender sticks or grated in a salad and is also a substitution for potatoes in recipes. We like to mix some celeriac in mashed potatoes or potato au gratin. It is a tasty addition to soups and stews.

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 or broccoli, and ground beef, topped with mashed potatoes.

Fennel: Zefa Fino

Vegetable with the white bulb and dill-like fronds. Has a subtle flavor and aroma of anise. Try adding finely shaved fennel to a pureed carrot soup.

Garlic: Bogatyr or Music

Kale: Winterbor or Ripbor

Try chopping and adding to marinara sauces.

Leeks: Tadorna or Bandit

Leeks are the longer, slender, milder-flavored cousin to onions. Use all of the leek except for the tough upper green leaf.

Onions: Cortland/Copra and Redwing

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.

Potatoes: Yellow Carola

Sage

This is a great herb for roasted chicken!

Tomatoes

Winter Squash: Carnival (multicolored acorn) and Delicata (slender striped)

WEEK 15: SOUP WEATHER IS HERE

Fall has come with a bang and this weather seems to trigger the soup reflex in our household. There is nothing better on these chilly fall days than a steaming hot bowl of soup with crusty bread and butter. The minestrone soup recipe in this newsletter is one of our favorites because it is adaptable and can use most of the veggies in your box throughout the rest of the season. We also especially love the sage and honey cornbread with our fall soups.

This week's box truly marks the turn of seasons with winter squash, leeks, and celeriac making an appearance, along with the return of kale, our favorite green for sautéing and soups. You will also start to notice the gracious exit of the summer crops. Eggplant is done for the season and with the impending frost on Monday night, we spent a good portion of the day gleaning the very frost-sensitive peppers and tomatoes. We also covered a few marginally frost-sensitive crops with row cover, a spun fabric that gives the crops a few degrees of extra warmth for protection from light frosts. The frost did not catch us this week but we will be ready for it when it does. The plus side of the cooler evening weather is better flavor for the cold hardy crops like Brussels sprouts, broccoli, carrots, and kale to name a few. The later fall carrots can just not be rivaled for their sweetness.

Please give a call or email to let us know if you can attend the Share Member Potluck at the end of this month if you have not already done so. We are looking forward to seeing you back at the farm again or for the first time if you have not been out yet this season!

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.

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 Kubk. 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.

Number 3: Meet other great Drifter share members!

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

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0.1" (this is being generous with the rain gauge)

High Temp: 96°F

Low Temp: 37°F

Sightings: Red squirrel caching walnuts . . . in our attic!

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 . . .

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

Potatoes/Garlic: Do not refrigerate.

Winter Squash: Will store at room temperature for at least a month. Store for several months in a dry and cool location (50-55 degrees). You can bake winter squash easily by slicing in half, scooping out seeds and placing cut side down, oiled, on a cookie sheet or cake pan.

RECIPES TO CHECK OUT

- Fennel Ideas from the Week 6 Newsletter
- Chicken Celery Stir Fry from Week 12 Newsletter
- Braised Fennel Meatballs from the Week 14 Newsletter
- Fettucine with Brown Butter and Sage on our website in the Recipe section

PRESERVING TIPS

- **Broccoli/Romanesco:** 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.
- **Peppers:** Wash, remove stem and seeds. Either slice thinly or chop and freeze in Ziploc bags.
- **Kale:** Remove stem, wash well and blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain, chill, drain well again and pack in Ziploc freezer bags.

RECIPES

Minestrone Soup

Adapted from "The Enchanted Broccoli Forest"

Minestrone, meaning "the big soup" in Italian, is a thick soup made with many veggies and usually pasta or rice. This is simply a base recipe but the sky is the limit - any vegetable will go well in this recipe.

We usually add a big bunch of stemmed, chopped kale to the soup near the end of cooking as well. You could also add cooked pinto or kidney beans to fill out the soup.

- 1 lb. stew meat
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large potato (or several small)
- 2 c. chopped onion
- 2-3 c. chopped veggies such as broccoli, romanesco, peppers, cabbage, celeriac, etc.
- 2-3 stalks celery, minced
- 1-2 large carrots, diced
- 1 leek, sliced and minced
- 6 c. water and/or broth
- 2 t. salt
- 1 ½ c. tomatoes, fresh, frozen or canned
- 1 ½ c. tomato juice or pureed tomatoes
- 2 c. cooked pasta or rice
- Herbs (thyme, parsley, oregano, etc)

Brown stew meat in a skillet with oil, salt, pepper and garlic. In the mean time, combine potato, onion, cabbage, celery, carrot, leeks, water and salt in a soup pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, covered for about 20 minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato juice, pasta or rice, stew meat, and fresh herbs and simmer another 20 minutes. After we add the stew meat, we usually put some water in the skillet the meat was fried in to get all of the flavor from the skillet and add that water to the soup pot. Season with salt and pepper and serve with bread or biscuits.

Fennel Orange Muffins

Adapted from "From Asparagus to Zucchini"

- 1 orange, peeled and seeded
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 c. vegetable oil or melted butter
- ½ c. brown sugar (could substitute in some honey)
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 - 1 ½ c. grated fennel bulbs
- 2 ¼ c. flour
- 1 ½ t. baking powder
- ½ t. salt
- 2 t. chopped fennel leaves (optional)

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Puree orange, then combine with eggs, oil, sugar, vanilla and fennel in a bowl. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt then fold into wet ingredients. Spoon into muffin tins and bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

Sage and Honey Cornbread

Adapted from Epicurious website

- 1 c. cornmeal
- 1 c. flour
- 1 T. baking powder
- ¾ t. salt
- 2 t. chopped fresh sage plus 12 leaves
- 1 c. milk or dairy substitute
- 1/2 c. honey
- 1 egg
- 1/2 c. butter or Earth Balance

Heat 10-inch cast iron skillet in oven 10 minutes. Whisk first 4 ingredients and 2 teaspoons chopped sage in large bowl to blend. Whisk milk, honey, and egg in medium bowl to blend. Remove skillet from oven; add 1/2 c. butter. Swirl until butter is melted. Pour all except 2 tablespoons butter into egg mixture. Add whole sage leaves to butter in skillet; toss to coat. Arrange leaves over bottom of skillet, spacing apart. Add egg mixture to cornmeal mixture; stir until just combined. Pour batter over sage leaves in skillet. Bake until browned around edges and knife inserted into center comes out clean, about 22 minutes. Invert onto plate. If you do not have a cast iron skillet, you could use a regular baking pan. Just melt butter on the stove and continue with instructions.

Glazed Carrots

Adapted from Living magazine

This is a delicious and easy side dish. Easily doubled and the amounts of ingredients are not set in stone.

- 5-6 carrots (1 1/2 pounds)
 - ½ - 1 T. sugar
 - 1-2 T butter
 - ¼ - ½ t. salt
 - Pepper to taste
- Slice carrots ¼ inch thick at a diagonal. In a skillet, bring carrots, sugar, 1/3 cup water, butter, and salt to boil. Reduce heat; simmer, partly covered, 10 minutes. Cook uncovered, over high, tossing often until tender, about 5 or so minutes. Season with pepper.