



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 25, 2012

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Broccoli: Imperial

Cabbage: Famosa Savoy

Very tasty sautéed with olive oil, butter and a little onion and garlic.

Carrots: Nectar

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. A tasty addition to soups and stews.

Garlic: Bogatyr or Music

Kale: Winterbor or Ripbor

One of our favorite additions to marinara sauces, soups, shepherd's pie, quiches, and frittatas. When walking through the fields, Abe points to veggies and either says, "Hold it!" or "Eat it!" When we passed by the kale yesterday, he exclaimed, "Eat it!", pulled off a leaf, took a big bite and said "Mmmm!" The fall kale is really quite delicious.

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

Parsley: Italian

A winner in soup - especially minestrone.

Peppers: Green/Colored Bell or Sweet Italian

Enjoy the last of the peppers for the season!

Potatoes: Red, Yellow or Blue

Our potato yields have been a little lower this year due to leaf hoppers and very wet spring soils so we are giving out a little less right now.

Tomatoes

The last of the crop - the plants have passed into the netherworld after the frost.

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

The delicatas are a very sweet squash that are delicious all on their own. Carnivals are great on their own as well but are also delicious in stuffed squash recipes (nothing wrong with a dollop of butter and a touch of brown sugar either!). Butternuts are perfect for soups, for roasting with garlic, and in other squash dishes that call for a large amount of squash.

WEEK 16: WELCOME TO THE FARM JACK

Jack Frost came a knockin' on Saturday night. We had been checking the weather forecast periodically throughout the day on Saturday and the low was fluctuating around 31 degrees which would mean a light frost (goodbye to the summer crops), but we were not too worried about most of the other crops. We had already covered several frost sensitive crops to protect them for the night. So, we spent a good portion of the day on Saturday harvesting peppers and tomatoes knowing those crops would be wiped out by the frost. However, at 8:30pm on Saturday night, we checked the weather one more time before going to bed and lo and behold, the predicted low was now down to 27 degrees! Now 27 degrees is a whole different story. Winter squash, while fine at 31 degrees, can get frost damage at 27 degrees; we were especially concerned about the low areas of our fields.

So, off we went, bundled up and armed with headlamps and the truck headlights to harvest as much mature squash as possible. The butternuts and delicatas, which have a thinner skin, are especially sensitive to freezing temps so we focused our efforts on those varieties. We cut and piled the squash to hold their internal field heat. We also covered the piles with a couple layers of row cover to keep the warmth in and the frost out. Checking the crops the next day, we were happy we stayed out until 11:30pm because some of more sensitive squash that did not get harvested (100% accuracy is a challenge in the dark!) got a touch of frost damage. These are still great-tasting squash but their shelf life is a little less. Some of the butternuts in your box this week may have a touch of that frost damage so we are giving them out now for you to use them a little sooner.

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, gourds 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

THE TIME HAS ARRIVED!!! 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.

Number 2: Bring home a jack-o-lantern pumpkin.

Number 1: Put the C (community) in CSA!

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

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0"

High Temp: 78°F

Low Temp: 29°F (Frosty!)

Sightings: Painted turtle by the machine shed and spotted fawn eating apples in the back yard (Abe's comments: "Eyes. Legs. Nose. Cute!")

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.

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

- Minestrone Soup from Week 15 Newsletter
- Glazed Carrots from Week 15 Newsletter
- Savory Sesame Kale on our website
- Celeriac au Gratin on our website

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.
- 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

Marakesh Cabbage

Adapted from the Duluth Whole Foods Co-op

- 4 T. canola or olive oil
- 1 head green cabbage, shredded
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 t. cumin
- 2 t. coriander
- 1 t. ginger
- ¼ t. paprika
- 1 t. cinnamon
- 1 t. sea salt
- ¼ c. water (add more if needed)

Saute onion and carrot in oil for a few minutes on medium heat. Add cabbage and cook about 10 minutes stirring often. Add remaining ingredients and cook on low heat for another 10 minutes until all vegetables are just done.

Sausage and Pepper Stew

Adapted from Living magazine

This recipe could also be made without the meat. Saute veggies in olive oil and season with a nice portion of Italian seasoning. Add mushrooms for a little more depth.

- ¾ lb. Italian sausage
- 1 medium onion, cut into ¼ inch thick half moons
- 1 green bell pepper, cored, seeded and cut into ½ inch thick strips
- 1 red or yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded and cut into ½ inch thick strips
- 1 ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. black pepper
- 1 28 oz. can whole tomatoes, seeded and chopped (could also use fresh tomatoes)
- ¼ packed Italian parsley, coarsely chopped

Cut or crumble sausage into 1-inch pieces. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add sausage: cook, stirring often, until browned and cooked through, about 8 minutes. Remove sausage from pan and set aside. Pour off all but 1-2 T. fat from the pan. Return to medium heat and add onion. Saute until just beginning to brown and soften, about 5 minutes. Add peppers, and continue to cook for 10 minutes more. You may choose to cover the skillet with a lid toward the end cooking. Season with salt and pepper. Add tomatoes; bring to a boil, and then lower heat and simmer until vegetables are tender and sauce has reduced and thickened slightly, about 12 minutes more. Return sausage to pan, and cook just enough to heat through. Stir in parsley, and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Squash Soup

We visited the Arboretum in Chanhasseen last fall and they were serving samples of this soup in their kid craft area. It was absolutely delicious. If you don't have fresh ginger at home, you could use dried ginger but this might just be one time you make a trip to the co-op or grocery store for the real deal.

- 6 c. peeled, chopped squash (1 butternut works well)
- 3 T. olive oil
- ¼ - 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 T. fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 c. vegetable stock
- Juice of one orange
- Salt and pepper to taste

Saute the garlic, onions and ginger in olive oil while you peel, seed, and chop the squash into 1 inch cubes. Add the chopped squash and sauté for 5 minutes. Pour the stock into the pot and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer covered for an hour. Add the orange juice and salt and pepper to taste. Puree the soup and serve.

Kale Salad with Bacon, Egg and Potatoes

Adapted from "Plenty"

- 2 cooked potatoes, sliced into ¼ inch pieces
- 12 oz. bacon, cut into small pieces
- 1 bunch kale, stems removed, chopped somewhat finely
- 4 eggs

Mustard dressing:

- ¼ c. olive oil
- 1 ½ t. balsamic vinegar
- 1 t. mustard
- ½ t. honey
- Salt and pepper

Heat 3 T. olive oil and fry bacon and potatoes until potatoes are almost golden. Add the kale and cook until tender. Season with salt and pepper and toss with most of the mustard dressing. Fry eggs in a skillet. Serve fried eggs on top of kale salad. Drizzle with remaining dressing.