



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 9, 2012

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Beets: Red Ace

Great for roasting: Peel, dice toss with olive oil, salt and pepper and roast in a 375 degrees

Brussels Sprouts: Diablo or Nautic

To use, snap sprouts off the stalk, trim the end and remove any limp leaves. There are many great recipes out there for Brussels sprouts, but are also delicious simply blanched for about 5 minutes.

Cauliflower: Fremont or Skywalker**Cabbage: Storage**

This is a great storage cabbage that will last a long time in your fridge if uncut so there is no rush to use it up. Great for winter soups, stews, with pork roasts, in stir fries.

Carrots: Nectar, Negovia, or Bolero**Celeriac: Mars or Brilliant**

We used this along with carrots, cabbage, onions, potatoes, and kale in a chicken vegetable soup. Yum!

Garlic: Bogatyr or Music**Kale: Ripbor****Leeks: Tadorna or Bandit****Onions: Cortland/Copra and Redwing****Parsnips: Lancer**

Parsnips are the long, slender carrot-like vegetable. Their sweetness comes out when they are roasted or slowly sauteed. Also try in the crock pot with carrots, potatoes, celeriac and a roast.

Potatoes: Red or Yellow**Pie Pumpkin: New England Pie**

The pumpkin in your box this week has a thick, sweet flesh and is for eating rather than décor though it can be decorative until you bake it up. Display indoors to protect from a frost or freeze.

Heirloom Pumpkin: Long Island Cheese

The large, flat tan-colored pumpkin is a beautiful pumpkin for display but even better for eating. Prepare in the same way you would the pie pumpkin but cut into wedges rather than in half for faster, more consistent baking. This is a great pumpkin for baked goods, soups and stews.

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

Delicatas are very sweet and delicious on their own. Carnivals are great on their own as well but are delicious in stuffed squash recipes or served with a dollop of butter and a touch of brown sugar.

Butternuts are perfect for soups, roasting with garlic, and in squash dishes that call for a large amount of squash.

WEEK 18: AND THIS WILL BRING AN END TO THE GROWING SEASON

Those words, which come along with the predictions of the first hard freeze, always make us smile a bit because they seem rather dramatic. There are a few crops that make it through this freeze, like the roots crops, Brussels sprouts, and kale to name a few. That being said, that hard freeze does put a damper on the growth of many other sensitive crops. A grower in the southern or western states, with their seemingly unending growing season, may occasionally appreciate their chance at those words. Though the crops are slowing, however, there is no end of work at the farm. Our high tunnel is now fully constructed and is waiting for a non-windy day for its plastic skin to complete the project. We are hoping the weather will deliver us one of those days soon before it gets ridiculously cold! We are already in the planning process for next year as well, and the winter months will give us ample time for building and tractor projects.

Before this growing season is fully over for the farm and winter settles in, we sure wouldn't mind some good moisture. It is a necessity to water the root crops like carrots and parsnips before we harvest them, otherwise we would have no chance of getting them out of the ground. According to Paul Huttner's Updraft Blog on MPR, 100% of Minnesota is in drought or is "abnormally dry" and this is the driest September in 130 years. We are keeping our northern Minnesota neighbors in mind as they deal with wildfires popping up around the region.

We want to extend a big thank you to all of you for joining us this season and making an investment in this CSA. We are honored to provide produce to you and your families and hope that you can join us again next year! Included in this box you will find a 2012 End of Season Share Member Survey as well as a CSA Registration Form for the 2013 season. We will hold your spot for you until January 31, 2013 after which time we will open spots up to interested families; if you register with a deposit by that date, you can pay this season's share price (see note attached to registration form). Also, we are offering a \$10 credit to returning share members who refer a family that signs up for a CSA share next season. Please let us know if you have any questions about registration.

The End of Season Survey is one of the best ways for you to give feedback on your CSA experience. We take these surveys to heart and made several changes in what we grew this year based on last year's responses. It is our goal to make your CSA experience as positive as possible so we thank you in advance for your input. In answer to several members who inquired, we will be sending out statements during the 3rd week in October to those who have a balance from additional purchases such as eggs or preserving shares.

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.

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

Please remember to return your last CSA boxes to your pick-up site. We will be making trips to pick-up sites to gather those near the end of this month. Thanks!

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0"

High Temp: 77°F

Low Temp: 24°F

Sightings: A massive flock of blackbirds swooping into and out of the trees outside our house. "Cacophony" is the best word to describe the sound.

ADDITIONAL PREP/STORAGE INFO

Winter Squash: Will store at room temperature for at least a month (this is conservative, squash is hardy stuff). 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.

Pie Pumpkin: Prepare your pie pumpkin in the same manner as winter squash. For a richer pumpkin puree, place baked and pureed pumpkin in a greased baking pan and roast at 375 until some of the liquid is reduced. Each pie pumpkin is enough for at least one pie, depending on your recipe. Use leftovers for muffins, scones or breads. For quick preparation later in the year, bake your pie pumpkin, then measure out the puree for your favorite pumpkin recipes. Freeze these amounts in Ziploc bags or containers, write the amount frozen on the container, then they will be at the ready to thaw and use for baked goods later on.

Brussels Sprouts: Brussels sprouts contain a substance that produces sulfur when heated. In small amounts, this creates a nice peppery character and flavor. Overcooking, however, can create an unpleasant odor and taste. This is probably why brussels sprouts have gotten such a bad rap in the vegetable world. It is best to cook brussels sprouts briefly; steaming or sautéing works best. Brussels sprouts are especially nice sautéed with butter or salted olive oil. Brussels sprouts are best used within a week or two. After that time, their odor increases. They do, however, freeze very well. Blanch sprouts for 3-5 minutes, rinse well in cold water to stop cooking, drain, let dry, and pack into airtight containers or Ziploc freezer bags.

RECIPES TO CHECK OUT

- Celeriac au Gratin on our website
- Pumpkin Scones on our website
- Brussels sprout, beet and parsnip recipes in the week 17 newsletter
- Tawny Pumpkin Pie on our website
- Pumpkin Quesadillas on our website
- Sage Pesto on our website
- Fettuccine with Brown Butter and Sage on our website

Parsnip Patties

Adapted from "From Asparagus to Zucchini"

Up to 1 lb. medium parsnips
1 egg yolk
Salt and pepper
1 egg white, slightly beaten
1 c. soft whole wheat bread crumbs (mixed with cornmeal or wheat germ, if desired)
Butter and/or oil for frying

Chop parsnips; steam until tender. Mash thoroughly. Mix in egg yolk, salt and pepper to taste. Form into patties, dip into egg white, then roll in crumbs. Sauté in oil and/or butter until golden brown. These can also be cooked in an ungreased skillet or in the oven.

RECIPES

Pasta with Chicken and Brussels Sprouts

Adapted from Good Housekeeping magazine

12 oz. pasta
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into ½-inch chunks
Salt and pepper
2 t. olive oil
Up to 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, sliced
¼ c. water
1 T. butter or Earth Balance
¼ t. crushed red pepper
¼ c. dried bread crumbs
3 cloves garlic, minced
¼ c. Parmesan cheese
1 T. finely chopped parsley or sage

Cook pasta according to directions. Reserve ½ c. pasta cooking water. Season chicken with ¼ t. each salt and pepper. In skillet, heat oil on medium-high. Add chicken; cook 6 minutes or until cooked through, stirring. Transfer to bowl. To skillet, add sprouts, water, butter, red pepper, and 1/8 t. salt; cook 3 minutes, stirring. Add crumbs and garlic. Cook, stirring, 2 minutes to toast crumbs. Stir in chicken and pasta water. Serve with Parmesan and herbs.

Butternut Squash, Leek, and Potato Soup with Crunchy Kale

Adapted from Real Food magazine

1 butternut squash, halved and seeded
Up to 1 bunch kale
3 t. olive oil, divided
1 medium leek, trimmed, washed and chopped (you could also substitute onion)
4 c. vegetable or chicken broth
3 small potatoes, peeled and diced
1 medium apple, peeled, cored and chopped
½ t. ground cinnamon
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the squash cut side down in a baking dish; add a thin film of water and cover the pan with foil. Roast until squash is tender when pierced, about 30 minutes. Peel off the skin and cut squash into ¼ - ½ inch cubes. Set aside. While the oven is on, make the crispy kale. Pull the kale leaves from the tough stems. Cut leaves into thin slivers. Place in a baking pan and drizzle with 1 T. olive oil. Toss to coat and spread in an even layer. Sprinkle lightly with a pinch of salt. Roast 15 minutes or until crisp. Set aside.

In a soup pot, heat the remaining 2 T. oil. Add the leek and cook, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the broth, potatoes, apple, cinnamon, and ½ t. salt. Cover and cook 15 minutes until potatoes are tender. Add half of the roasted squash. Puree the soup in the food processor or blender until smooth and return to the pot, or use an immersion blender and puree in pot. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the remaining squash to the pureed soup and reheat, covered, until the roasted squash is heated through. Ladle soup into bowls. Float a cluster of kale in each bowl.

Butternut Squash and Cabbage Galette

Adapted from Three Many Cooks website

3 c. cabbage quartered, cored and sliced 1/2-inch thick
3 c. butternut squash peeled, seeded, and sliced 1/2-inch thick
1 red onion, halved and sliced 1/2-inch thick
2 T. olive oil
1 t. dried thyme leaves (or fresh)
Salt and ground black pepper
1 9-inch piecrust
4 oz. cream cheese
1 ¼ c. cheese, grated (Gruyere is recommended but use what you have)

Place cabbage, butternut squash, and onions on a large rimmed baking sheet. Toss with olive oil, thyme, and a generous sprinkling of salt and pepper. Adjust oven racks to lowest and middle positions, set vegetables on bottom rack in cold oven; set to 425 degrees and roast, stirring once, until just cooked and starting to color, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, roll pie dough to a 14-inch circle and set on a large cookie sheet. Mix cream cheese and 3/4 of the grated cheese of choice in a large bowl. Add hot vegetables to cheese mixture, toss to thoroughly mix. Adjust seasonings. Spread mixture over pastry, leaving a 2-inch border. Fold pastry border over vegetables and sprinkle with remaining grated cheese. Bake on middle rack until bubbly and golden brown, about 20 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes, slice, and serve.