



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 24, 2013

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: Dragon, Nectar and Yellowstone

A rainbow of flavor! Beautiful and flavorful when roasted or with a stew.

Cauliflower

Because the cauliflower, broccoli and romanesco developed heads during quite hot weather, these are not the prettiest heads you have seen. They tend to be not quite as tight and a little uneven in their florets, but they still taste delicious! Keep an eye out for cabbage worms as well. We try to manage them as best we can with crop rotation, organically approved sprays, and cleaning at harvest time but this has been a particularly bad fall for them!

Garlic: Music, Bogatyr or Persian Star

Leeks

Leeks are the longer, slender, milder-flavored cousin to onions. Use all of the leek except for the tough upper green leaf. Sliced leeks are great as a pizza topper along with oregano. We love these in quiches and frittatas as well.

Lettuce: Butter or Romaine

Onions: Red and Yellow

Oregano

Pepper: Colored Bells and Heirlooms

Peppers are nearing their end soon. Take advantage of these sweet veggies and make fajitas, burritos, enchiladas, you name it!

Hot Pepper: Jalapeno

Potatoes: All Blue

Try these mashed with roasted garlic, a little sour cream if desired, butter or Earth Balance, salt and pepper - delish!

Salad Mix: Allstar

Tomatoes: Slicers/Heirlooms

The tomatoes are really slowing down now. Though there is not a frost in sight yet, there are few green fruits left on the plants so we are nearing the end of tomato season!

Winter Squash: Acorn or Delicata (long, striped squash)

The first of the winter squash this season. We have been waiting as long as possible to let them sweeten since they had a slow start with the cool early summer. The delicata squash have a shorter shelf life than the acorns, so eat those a little sooner (within a month or month and a half, but why wait!)

WEEK 15: JOYS AND CHALLENGES

RUNNING LOW ON BOXES! Please remember to return share boxes to your pick-up site. You are welcome to bring bags to transfer produce into so you do not have to remember your box next time.

The fall is really a magical time on the farm and it is always a pleasure to be able to share this time with our share members. It was great to see so many of you out to the farm on Sunday for the fall potluck. The connection with you and your families is one of the many reasons we are choosing to farm and especially farm with the CSA model. We appreciate the communication we have with you and enjoy the conversations, kid play time, swapping of recipes and dishes, and sharing of experiences. The C or "Community" in CSA is very important and truly is one of the joys of farming for us.

With the joys come the challenges but these we all take in stride. With Joan being 7 ½ months pregnant, the lifting and harvesting has just begun taking its toll with some rather challenging back pain. The farm work waits for no backs, though, so we keep trucking along and making adjustments where necessary. We are incredibly grateful for a couple of our nearby friends who also farm who have taken the time to help us out with harvesting to take a little of the strain off. Thus comes more of the joy of farming - we are blessed with a supportive community both through you, our members, and through the surrounding farming community.

The farm has seen a few changes this week as we are in the process of planning and growing for next year. We will be hiring two full-time employees next year as we will be expanding our share memberships. These employees will have the opportunity to live on the farm so Nick has been busy moving a small outbuilding on to the farm to convert into living quarters for them. Our neighbor John has been instrumental in helping us with the building move (many thanks to a big tractor, trailer and skid steer) and now the building is here, ready for the next steps of converting it into a cozy abode. Winter projects, here we come!

Additional Autumn Share

At the end of October we will be offering a one-time Autumn Share for approximately \$55 that will be filled with storage vegetables like winter squash, onions, carrots, leeks and beets along with dried herb and gourds. 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.

Oh Sweet Honey

Our friend Carol keeps bees on the farm and she has just extracted the honey! She is making this honey available to our share members on a first come-first served basis. Honey is limited, so let us know soon. Honey comes packaged in a pint container (1.5 pounds) for \$8.50. This is a unique opportunity to taste local honey right from your farm! We will deliver this honey with one of your share boxes so there is no additional trip needed on your part.

Honeycrisp Apples

Our friends Amy and Paul from Kalliroe Farm in Montevideo are offering first quality half bushels of organic Honeycrisp apples to our members this year. A half bushel (20#) of organic Honeycrisp apples will be \$46. If you are interested in this opportunity, we can deliver the apples alongside your next CSA box. They are oh so tasty and delicious for so many fall dishes and baked goods!

***Several share members have asked about payment for additional items such as eggs, honey, apples, etc. At the end of the season, we will send out statements to share members with a balance on their account so you do not need to worry about paying for each individual item as they come. Also, for both the honey and apples, you can make checks payable to Prairie Drifter Farm.*

-Best wishes from your farmers,
Joan, Nick, Abe and the littlest Drifter-to-be

Please remember to return your CSA boxes to your pick-up site. You may also choose to bring bags to transfer your produce into at your pick-up site so you do not have to remember to bring the boxes back. You can also return the cherry tomato pint containers for reuse. Thank you!

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0..4"

High Temp: 80°F

Low Temp: 46°F

Sightings: Gulls circling the fields, red belly snake, sumac leaves turning a dusky red.

HOW TO STORE YOUR PRODUCE

Your produce this week can be stored in the refrigerator (drawers or main refrigerator) in plastic bags. A few exceptions . . .

Carrots Remove green tops for longer storage.

Tomatoes Remove from bag once you get home and store on the counter, shoulder side down.

Potatoes/Garlic: Do not refrigerate. Store in a cool place out of sunlight.

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.

PRESERVING TIPS

- Broccoli/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.
- Peppers: Core and seed. Chop to desired size and place in Ziploc freezer bags, flatten and freeze.

Cauliflower Puree

Adapted from Living magazine
We put this recipe in one of last year's newsletters, but it is so easy and so tasty we wanted to include it again. This is a bit like making mashed potatoes and is a great side dish for a roast or chicken.

1 head cauliflower, stem and tough stalks trimmed, florets roughly chopped
1 c. water or chicken stock
2-3 t. sour cream or yogurt (you could also add non-dairy alternative such as soy cream cheese or rice/flax milk)
1 T. butter or Earth Balance, softened
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine cauliflower and water or chicken stock in a medium saucepan, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, and cook until cauliflower is very tender, about 10 minutes. Transfer cauliflower to a blender or food processor. Process until smooth, adding 1-2 T. cooking liquid. Add sour cream and butter (or alternatives), and process more until well combined. Season with salt and pepper.

Recipes

Fettucine with Leeks and White beans

Adapted from www.marthastewart.com

This is a great meal served alongside a fresh salad topped with tomatoes, peppers and a vinaigrette!

2 T. olive oil
3 leeks, sliced and cleaned, use all of the leek excluding the tough green top (we usually cut leeks in half the long way and then slice)
Coarse salt and ground pepper
2 cans (15 1/2 ounces each) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
3 1/2 c. chicken broth
1/2 t. dried sage
12 ounces fettuccine
2 T. fresh lemon juice
1/2 c. heavy cream (or non-dairy substitute, e.g. rice milk)
1/2 c. finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for serving (optional)
2-3 T. chopped fresh oregano

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-low heat. Add leeks, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring often, until softened, about 10 minutes. Do not let leeks brown. Add beans and broth to pan; mash about one third of beans. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer. Cook until sauce has thickened but is still soupy, about 10 minutes. Add lemon juice. Stir in cream and Parmesan.

Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta to desired tenderness. Transfer to a bowl, and toss with remaining tablespoon oil to coat. Add pasta to sauce; cook, stirring, until heated through, 2 minutes. Serve sprinkled with oregano and more cheese, if desired.

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. Lovely with multicolored carrots.

5-6 carrots (1 1/2 pounds)

1/2 - 1 T. sugar

1-2 T butter

1/4 - 1/2 t. salt

Pepper to taste

Slice carrots 1/4 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.

Roasted Blue Potatoes with Fresh Herbs

Adapted from www.thehungrymouse.com

1 bag blue potatoes

1 T. fresh thyme, minced (could also add rosemary and/or thyme)

1 clove garlic, finely minced

3-4 T. olive oil

kosher salt

freshly cracked black pepper

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper if desired (helps garlic from sticking on pan) and set aside. Scrub potatoes well and cut into wedges. Toss with olive oil, garlic, herbs, salt and pepper. Spread on sheet pan and roast in a 350 degree oven until tender and lightly browned.

Creamy Broccoli Cauliflower Soup

Adapted from www.thecomfortofcooking.com

1 quart chicken or vegetable broth

1/2 - 1 onion, finely chopped

1 head cauliflower, chopped into small florets

1/2 head broccoli, chopped into small florets

1 T. chicken or vegetable bouillon granules (optional)

Salt and pepper, to taste

1/4 c. flour

1/2 c. milk or non-dairy alternative

2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese (if desired)

In a large pot, combine chicken broth, onion, cauliflower and broccoli. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low. Continue to simmer until vegetables are tender. Add chicken bouillon if using, salt and pepper. In a bowl, combine flour and milk. Whisk until there are no lumps. Add mixture to soup, stirring continuously as soup thickens. Blend with an immersion blender, or in batches in a food processor, until smooth. You may also choose to only blend part of the soup if you would like a chunkier texture. Stir in Cheddar cheese until completely melted if using.