



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 15, 2013

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Broccoli: Imperial

These broccoli heads have loved this fall weather!

Brussels Sprouts: Diablo, Nautic or Igor

To use, snap sprouts off the stalk, trim the end and remove any limp leaves. They are actually delicious simply blanched for about 5 minutes, tossed with olive oil, salt, pepper and a little balsamic vinegar. We also love to roast Brussels sprouts.

Cabbage: Savoy

Mmm . . . warm soups and casseroles!

Carrots: Dragon, Nectar and/or Yellowstone

Great in beef barley soup with chopped kale.

Celeriac: Prinz or Mars

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 hearty addition to soups and stews.

Celery: Tango

A favorite in Beef Barley Mushroom, Chicken Wild Rice or Potato Leek soups.

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 had leeks this weekend in a quiche with kale, red pepper, garlic, and pork sausage.

Onions: Red and Yellow**Pepper: Colored Bell and heirloom**

Take advantage of these sweet veggies and make fajitas, burritos, enchiladas, you name it!

Potatoes: Kennebec

This is a new variety for us this year and thus far, we are fans!

Pumpkin: Jack O'Lantern**Sage****Winter Squash: Butternut (tan colored), Jet (green acorn squash) and Delicata (long, striped squash)**

The delicata squash have a shorter shelf life than the acorns, so eat those a little sooner. The butternut squash will store for the longest time.

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 2.25"

High Temp: 78°F

Low Temp: 37°F

Sightings: Tons of Smammals dashing through the grasses (a.k.a. Small Mammals, e.g. voles)

WEEK 18: THE TIME HAS COME, THE LAST SHARE BOX OF THE SEASON

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. We will make a last run to pick-up sites at the end of the month to pick up these last share boxes. Returning your boxes makes for a significant savings of resources for the farm - thank you!

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

"To talk of many things:

Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--

Of cabbages--and kings." -Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Speaking of cabbages . . . makes us think of chilly fall days, a big pot of soup and a steaming mug of hot apple cider. The cold has found us finally and just at the right time. We have not yet had a farming season with such a mild fall. The past few years we have been very accustomed to frozen hoses on frosty harvest mornings, layered to the gills with our warm clothes to get through those early hours of harvest. This year has been positively pleasant with much less stress about impending cold snaps. That being said, today was quite the soggy, muddy day so you may notice your produce has a bit of dirt on it.

As our season wraps up, we want to extend a big thank you to your families for being share members of our farm this year. Your share membership not only brings fresh vegetables into your home but also plays an important part in keeping the next generation of farmers on the land and supporting stewardship of the land. We are encouraged by the growing interest in local and organic foods and love the ability to help bring healthy and delicious food into the homes of our members. Thank you for the opportunity to be your farm and your farmers and we hope you can join us again next season! We will be sending out an End of Season Survey soon that will give you an opportunity to give us feedback about this season. This is a great tool to communicate with us about what you enjoyed as well as giving suggestions for change so that your CSA experience can be positive and enriching.

We had an energetic group of friends including Irene and Margo from York Farm in Hutchinson and Bridget, one of our share members, out to harvest the remainder of our potatoes last Wednesday. It was fantastic to pull the rest of that crop in. Thank you so much! We also want to give a big thank you to our farm team this year . . . Amelia, Denise, Karen and Ann. These fantastic women have harvested, weeded, planted, been drenched by downpours, baked by sun, picked up endless amounts of sticks with a curious 2-year old and overall helped us ride through the season with laughter and joy. We also must thank Abe for keeping it fun, lighthearted, and in perspective. We will introduce you soon to the newest Drifter. More to come in November!

Season Wrap-up and Looking Ahead to Next Year

It is hard to believe, but October is here and the CSA season has come to a close. Several share members have asked about signing up again for a CSA membership next year. We will be putting our 2014 CSA Registration Forms out to current CSA members at the end of 2013 as we give current members the first opportunity to sign up for next season. Stay tuned!

Additional Autumn Share

On October 31st we will be delivering 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 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. Litchfield, Sartell and St. Cloud Autumn Shares will be delivered to your regular pick-up site on Thursday, October 31st.

***Several share members have asked about payment for additional items such as eggs, honey, apples, etc. Next week, 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

Upcoming Event

Atina Diffley, author of Turn Here Sweet Corn, will speak at the Willmar Public Library on Sat., Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. Co-sponsored by the library and the Willmar Community-Owned Grocery (COG). Diffley won the 2013 Minnesota Book Award for her memoir, which tells the dramatic success story of a sophisticated organic family farm through the voice of a female farmer whose connection to the land is born deeply of knowing it, working it, living and suffering by it. This is a fantastic book and Atina is a dynamic speaker so this is an event well worth your time!

PRODUCE TIPS

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 and pie pumpkins easily by slicing in half, scooping out seeds and placing cut side down, oiled, on a cookie sheet or cake pan. *To make pumpkin puree, simply blend cooked pumpkin flesh after scooping out of skin.*

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 FROM PAST NEWSLETTERS

- Butternut Squash, Leek and Potato Soup with Crunchy Kale: Week 17, 2013
- Celeriac Fries: Week 17, 2013
- Golden-Crusted Brussels Sprouts: Week 17, 2013
- Pumpkin Bread: Week 17, 2013 (you can substitute winter squash for the pumpkin as well)
- Pasta with Chicken and Brussels Sprouts: Week 18, 2012
- Butternut Squash and Cabbage Galette: Week 18, 2012
- Squash Soup: Week 16, 2012

Carrot Apple Muffins

Adapted from
www.wholefoodsmarket.com
1 ¼ c. whole wheat flour
¼ c. sugar
1 t. ground cinnamon
½ t. baking powder
½ t. baking soda
¼ t. sea salt
1 c. grated carrots
½ c. unsweetened applesauce
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
¼ c. milk or non-dairy substitute
¼ c. canola or safflower oil
1 t. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter and flour a 12-cup standard muffin tin or use muffin papers. Set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In a separate bowl, combine carrots, applesauce, eggs, milk, oil and vanilla. Add half the carrot mixture to the flour mixture, stir until blended then add the rest of the carrot mixture. Spoon batter into muffin cups and bake about 20 minutes or until a toothpick in the center of a muffin comes out clean. Serve warm.

Recipes

Dijon-Braised Brussels Sprouts

Adapted from smittenkitchen.com

1 lb. brussels sprouts
1 T. unsalted butter
1 T. olive oil
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 c. dry white wine
1 c. broth (chicken or vegetable)
2 to 3 shallots or 1 onion, peeled and thinly sliced
2 t. heavy cream
1 T. smooth dijon mustard (or more to taste)
2 T. chopped flat-leaf parsley (optional)

Trim sprouts and halve lengthwise. In a large, heavy 12-inch skillet heat butter and oil over moderate heat. Arrange halved sprouts in skillet, cut sides down, in one layer. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste. Cook sprouts, without turning until undersides are golden brown, about 5 minutes. [Updated to note: If your sprouts don't fit in one layer, don't fret! Brown them in batches, then add them all back to the pan, spreading them as flat as possible, before continuing with the shallots, wine, etc.]

Add the shallots, wine and stock and bring to a simmer. Once simmering, reduce the heat to medium-low (for a gentle simmer), cover the pot with a lid (foil works too, if your skillet lacks a lid) and cook the sprouts until they are tender can be pierced easily with the tip of a paring knife, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the lid, and scoop out brussels (leaving the sauce behind). Add cream and simmer for two to three minutes, until slightly thickened. Whisk in mustard. Taste for seasoning, and adjust as necessary with more salt, pepper or Dijon. Pour sauce over brussels, sprinkle with parsley, if using, and serve immediately.

Rustic Cabbage Soup

Adapted from www.101cookbooks.com

Great with a side of crusty bread!

1 T. olive oil
a big pinch of salt
1/2 lb. potatoes, skin on, cut 1/4-inch pieces
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
5 c. stock (vegetable or chicken)
1 ½ c. white beans, precooked or canned (drained & rinsed well)
1/2 medium cabbage, cored and sliced into 1/4-inch ribbons
more olive oil for drizzling
1/2 c. Parmesan cheese, freshly grated (optional)

Warm the olive oil in a large thick-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Stir in the salt and potatoes. Cover and cook until they are a bit tender and starting to brown a bit, about 5 minutes - it's o.k. to uncover to stir a couple times. Stir in the garlic and onion and cook for another minute or two. Add the stock and the beans and bring the pot to a simmer. Stir in the cabbage and cook for a couple more minutes, until the cabbage softens up a bit. Now adjust the seasoning - getting the seasoning right is important or your soup will taste flat and uninteresting. Taste and add more salt if needed, the amount of salt you will need to add will depend on how salty your stock is (varying widely between brands, homemade, etc). Serve drizzled with a bit of olive oil and a generous dusting of cheese if using.

Double Broccoli Quinoa

Adapted from www.101cookbooks.com

Try with a side of baked winter squash. You could substitute pasta of your choice for quinoa.

3 cups cooked quinoa
4-5 cups raw broccoli, cut into small florets and stems
3 medium garlic cloves
2/3 c. sliced or slivered almonds, toasted (could substitute sunflower seeds or walnuts)
1/3 c. freshly grated Parmesan (optional)
2 big pinches salt
2 T. fresh lemon juice
1/4 c. olive oil
1/4 c. heavy cream or non-dairy substitute
Optional toppings: slivered basil, sliced avocado, olives, crumbled feta or goat cheese

Heat the quinoa and set aside. Now barely cook the broccoli by pouring 3/4 cup water into a large pot and bringing it to a simmer. Add a big pinch of salt and stir in the broccoli. Cover and cook for a minute, just long enough to take the raw edge off. Transfer the broccoli to a strainer and run under cold water until it stops cooking. Set aside.

To make the broccoli pesto puree two cups of the cooked broccoli, the garlic, 1/2 cup of the almonds, Parmesan, salt, and lemon juice in a food processor. Drizzle in the olive oil and cream and pulse until smooth. Just before serving, toss the quinoa and remaining broccoli florets with about 1/2 of the broccoli pesto. Taste and adjust if needed, you might want to add more of the pesto a bit at a time, or you might want a bit more salt or an added squeeze of lemon juice. Turn out onto a serving platter and top with the remaining almonds, and some sliced avocado or any of the other optional toppings.