



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 19, 2014

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Beans: Strike or Provider

Beans are winding down - enjoy while they last!

Broccoli or Cauliflower**Cantaloupe: Halona****Carrots: Mokum or Yaya**

We like these sliced thinly and dipped in peanut butter for a mid-morning snack.

Celery

This celery is different than what you find in the grocery store. Most store-bought celery is grown in cool valleys in California with heavy irrigation and even temperatures. Celery grown in this region is darker, smaller, and more intense in flavor so it is most appropriate for cooking. Great in stir fry, soup, chili, egg salad and for making vegetable stock. Use the leaves in soups or for making stock.

Cucumber**Eggplant: Globe Italian or Japanese**

Eggplant must be cooked before being eaten. We love to slice and sauté eggplant with garlic, salt and pepper then serve on a sandwich with pesto and tomato. It is also nice in marinara sauce - dice and sauté in oil, garlic and salt then add to your marinara. Great in lasagna!

Garlic: Ukrainian Red**Onions: Walla Walla****Peppers: Hot and Sweet**

The tiny green peppers are jalapeno which are a hot pepper, perfect for fresh salsa. If you have a long skinny red pepper in your box, this is a sweet pepper called Jimmy Nardello. It may look like a cayenne but it really is sweet - great for frying.

Potatoes: Red Norland**Salad Mix****Summer Squash and Zucchini**

Though it seems like these crops never end, they will lessen over the next couple weeks so enjoy while they are here!

Tomatoes: Slicers/Heirlooms and Mixed Cherry

Red Zebra, Jaune Flamee, Persimmon, Big Beef, Pink Beauty, Black Velvet, Green Zebra, German Johnson, New Girl, Monica, Juliet . . . a fun mix!

Watermelon: Red or Yellow

Testing for ripeness is a delicate dance . . . dried first tendril on the plant, yellowing sun spot, feeling the "ribs" of the melon, and listening for just the right thump. We hope we picked you a sweet one!

WEEK 10: TENACITY

We had a rare treat this weekend of getting away from the farm to visit friends and favorite spots up the North Shore. Elizabeth held down the fort at the farm over the weekend which allowed the getaway - many thanks to Elizabeth! We took the kids to visit Wolf Ridge, where Nick and I met while teaching environmental education. We stayed at Round River Farm in Finland, MN which is owned and operated by our friends David and Lise Abazs. The visit was inspiring, educational and reinvigorating. David and Lise have been on their land for 30 years and literally carved out a vegetable farm deep in the woods just outside of Finland. They created a farm from the ground up, pulling up stumps and rocks, building their own home, barn, and sauna using locally milled wood and stone from their farm (the one benefit of rock picking from one's own land!) and doing this all off of the grid. Their farm is run by solar power and is incredibly energy efficient. The result of 30 years of hard work is a magical landscape of vegetables, fruits, flowers, and animals. They have a 50 member CSA which is a rarity in their part of northern Minnesota because the climate is so harsh. In fact, they bottomed out at 38 degrees one night during the past week! Their shortest growing season (last frost in the spring to first frost in the fall) on record was 31 days. 31 days! Can you imagine?

Our trip was inspiring as we vision for our farm over the next decade or two. Solar power is not too far into our future and we continue to find ways to create beauty and habitat on our land.

Farmers are a tenacious bunch no matter the climate. We are subject to the whims of weather and markets, bugs and disease, the work is back-breaking, the hours seemingly unending, but the result is the ability to deliver high quality food to families which gives us joy. In David and Lise's case, they are truly filling a niche which no one else has and we have great respect for their doggedness and commitment to sustainability.

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

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, August 23rd, 10:00am Cooking Class at the Farm. Learn how to freeze your extras to help your CSA share stretch into winter. Limited space - please RSVP if interested.

Sunday, September 28th, afternoon, Annual Share Member Potluck at the Farm. Join us for food, community, and play time on the farm!

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0.87"

High Temp: 84°F

Low Temp: 55°F

Sightings: Snake skins of all sizes. Grasshoppers, cicadas, crickets . . . a real live chorus!

MELON NOTE: Give the melons a good wash before cutting into them. We harvest the cantaloupe daily or they over ripen in an instant. If your cantaloupe is sweet-smelling it is ready to eat right now and needs to be stored in the fridge. If not sweet-smelling, let it sit on the counter a day or two to ripen before digging in.

TOMATO PINTS: We can reuse your tomato pint container. Please return them with your CSA box - thank you!

HOW TO STORE PRODUCE

Your produce this week can be stored in the refrigerator in plastic bags. Separate carrots and beets roots from their tops before storing to preserve freshness. A few exceptions . . .

- **Potatoes/Garlic** do not need to be refrigerated. Keep in a cool, dark place. Potatoes exposed to light will turn a green color, which causes the potato to be mildly toxic.
- **Eggplant** should not be refrigerated. Store on the counter and use soon.
- **Tomatoes** Store on the counter, shoulder side down.

PRESERVING TIPS

- **Snap Beans:** To freeze, trim ends, wash well, and cut beans into 2-4 inch lengths. Blanch in boiling water for 3 minutes. Cool. Drain. Pack beans into freezer bags or boxes. Seal, label with the year and freeze.
- **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.
- **Zucchini/Summer Squash:** Grate, drain and pack into freezer bags to use for winter muffins, breads, waffles and pancakes. Some of our favorite recipes call for about 2 cups of grated summer squash so we put that into quart freezer bags and just pull out a bag when we want to bake.
- **Celery:** Wash thoroughly. Chop stems, place into freezer bags and freeze. Great in soups or stocks or in the crock pot with a roast.

RECIPES ON OUR WEBSITE

- Carrot Cinnamon Waffles
- Cream of Celery Soup with Bacon
- Broccoli Fries

RECIPES FROM LAST WEEK'S

NEWSLETTER

- Green Bean and Bacon Vinaigrette
- Smashed Red Potatoes with Basil
- Summery Cous Cous Salad
- Roasted Eggplant Squash and Onions

Ratatouille

Thanks Hannah for sharing your version of this great and tasty recipe!

1 medium onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 T. olive oil
3 c. cubed, peeled eggplant
1 medium zucchini or summer squash, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1/4" slices
1 c. chopped tomatoes (peel if you wish)
3/4 c. chopped sweet pepper
3 T. dry white wine or water
1 T. snipped fresh basil
In a large skillet cook onion and garlic in hot oil over medium heat until tender. Stir in eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, sweet pepper, wine, 1/8 t. salt, and 1/8 t. black pepper. Bring to boil; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, over medium-low heat about 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Uncover and cook about 5 minutes more or until most of the liquid has evaporated, stirring occasionally. Stir in basil.

RECIPES

Pasta with Chickpeas, Celery, and Parsley

Adapted from www.washingtonpost.com

1 t. sea salt, plus more in the cooking water
1 1/2 c. celery, cut on the diagonal 1/4-inch wide (first cut vertically if the ribs are especially wide)
8 oz. dried pasta, preferably penne or another short, tubular shape
1/4 c. plus 4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 or 2 cloves garlic, crushed, then chopped
2 dried arbol chili peppers, seeded and broken into small pieces (or red pepper flakes), *optional*
1 1/2 c. cooked or canned no-salt-added chickpeas (if using canned, drain and rinse)
1/4 c. packed, coarsely chopped parsley
Freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add a generous pinch of salt, then add the celery; cook/blanch for 1 or 2 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the celery to a colander, and rinse with cool water to stop the cooking. Drain.

Once the water in the pot returns to a boil, add the pasta and cook according to the package directions. When the pasta is about 5 minutes from being al dente, heat 1/4 cup of the oil in a large saute pan over medium heat. Add the garlic (to taste) and dried arbol peppers or red pepper flakes, if using; cook, stirring every minute or so, until the garlic is almost golden and the peppers are starting to brown. Stir in the blanched celery and cook for 2 to 3 minutes; it should be tender yet retain a little resistance. Stir in the chickpeas, season with the 1 teaspoon of salt and with black pepper to taste, and warm through.

Drain the pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of its cooking water. Add the pasta, the parsley and a few tablespoons of the cooking water to the pan, stirring to incorporate the ingredients and dislodge any bits of garlic or peppers stuck to the bottom of the pan. If the mixture seems dry, add more of the reserved cooking water. Ladle the mixture into individual wide, shallow bowls. Drizzle 1 teaspoon of the remaining oil over each portion.

Baked Orzo with Eggplant and Mozzarella

Adapted from smittenkitchen.com

You can omit the cheese in this dish if you cannot eat dairy.

1 large eggplant, cut into 3/4-inch dice
Salt and black pepper
1/4 c. olive oil
1 carrot, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch dice
1 celery stalk, in a 1/4-inch dice
1 medium onion, finely diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
8 oz. orzo, a rice-shaped pasta, rinsed
1 t. tomato paste
1 1/2 c. vegetable stock or water
1 to 3 t. fresh parsley, chopped
1 t. grated lemon zest or more to taste, up to the zest of a whole lemon
4 oz. mozzarella, firmer is better here, cut into 1/3-inch dice
1 1/2 ounces (a generous 1/2 cup or 45 grams) parmesan, grated
3 medium tomatoes, diced

Sprinkle your eggplant generously with salt and let it drain in a colander for 30 minutes. I used this time to get the rest of my ingredients ready. After 30 minutes, rinse it well and pat it dry on towels.

Preheat your oven to 350° F. Heat a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the oil and once the oil is shimmering, add the eggplant. Fry for 8 minutes, stirring pieces occasionally. Using a slotted spoon or spatula, transfer them to paper towels to drain. Add celery and carrots to remaining oil and cook for 3 minutes before adding onion and garlic. Cook together for 5 more minutes on medium heat. Stir in the orzo and tomato paste and cook for two minutes more. Off the heat, add the oregano, mozzarella, parmesan, tomatoes, fried eggplant, lemon zest, 1 teaspoon table salt, many grinds of black pepper and the stock and mix well.

Transfer mixture to an 8×11-inch (about 2 quarts) ovenproof baking dish. Cover with foil and bake 20 minutes, then bake 20 minutes without the foil. (You can increase the ration of foil-on to foil-off time if you don't like a crunchy pasta lid.) Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.