



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER

JULY 29, 2014

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Beans: Strike

This variety is particularly tender and so sweet even just steamed lightly and served up with a bit of butter.

Beets: Red Ace or Merlin

Beets are richly nutritious and very versatile. They can be boiled, roasted, sautéed, or used in soups or even baked goods. We like to put grated beets in muffins, waffles, scones or pancakes. The color is awesome and the taste, delicious.

Cabbage: Red

Try out the recipe in this newsletter - melt in your mouth. Red cabbage is fabulously nutritious.

Carrots: Mokum or Yaya

We have been tucking carrots into lots of dishes over the last week, including cabbage rolls, ginger carrot scones and carrot waffles.

Cauliflower: Fremont or Amazing**Cucumber****Fennel**

Fennel is the vegetable with a white bulb and green fronds that has a light flavor of anise, which mellows as it is cooked. The entire vegetable is edible. You can thinly slice the bulb and/or fronds and add to salads, sandwiches or egg salad. We really enjoy fennel with marinara sauces and it adds a very delicious touch to meatballs. Also great in fennel muffins. We have several other fennel recipes on our website.

Lettuce: Summercrisp

Try a BLC sandwich - bacon, lettuce and cucumber! Tuck in a little cheese and mayo/aioli if desired- oh so good.

Onions: Walla Walla**Parsley: Italian Flat Leaf****Potatoes: Baby Red Norland**

These early baby reds are so tender and tasty just boiled/roasted and served with butter or olive oil, salt and pepper. Baby red potatoes have a tender skin and need to be eaten sooner than storage potatoes.

Salad Mix**Summer Squash and Zucchini**

WEEK 7: JUST FOOD

Farmer Nick at the keyboard this week. A big thank you to Farmer Joan who keeps all of us up to date on farming happenings each week through our newsletter. We are finally feeling caught up here at the farm. There is always more to do but this past weekend actually felt like a weekend with a lot of relaxing and more play than work around the farm. We did manage to harvest a few raspberries and strawberries from slowly maturing plants but according to Abe it was not work because we ate them all as we picked them.

I also had the privilege to get off the farm this weekend and take part in a Food Sovereignty workshop in St. Cloud put on by the Central Minnesota Sustainability Project featuring nationally renowned food activist LaDonna Redmond. It was a very inspiring and thought-provoking presentation that unpacked many issues that are often not talked about within the local, organic food movement. As an activist, LaDonna Redmond focuses her energy on food justice. Her motivation came from living in a neighborhood where it was easier to purchase a handgun than to purchase a fresh tomato. The inequitable distribution of food in our country is a large, multifaceted problem. There is a disproportionately high number of people of color who lack access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

LaDonna Redmond also drew connections between our current food system and the colonization of this country rooted in pushing Native Americans off their land and the use of African slaves for labor. This made me think about some large scale vegetables farms in California and Florida who to this day are exploiting their workers, many of whom are immigrants who are paid extremely low wages and work incredibly long hours. We need to demand that our food be produced with the values that we all hold and elevate these values to a new level.

Here is the good news, LaDonna Redmond said the most powerful thing that an individual can do to promote justice within our food system is to buy directly from a farmer. She even gave a large thank you to all the farmers in the room. We at Prairie Drifter Farm want to thank you for taking a big step toward a more just food system. Whatever your motivation to purchase a CSA share, we thank you and encourage you to promote the values and importance of local and organic food to your friends and family. Together we can bring about a more just food system.

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

Upcoming Events:

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: 0.9"

High Temp: 82°F

Low Temp: 52°F

Sightings: Honey bee in the borage flowers carrying gorgeous pink pollen on its legs.

HOW TO STORE PRODUCE

Your produce this week can be stored in the refrigerator in plastic bags. If you have room in your vegetable drawers, that's great. If not, they will be fine in the main refrigerator. Separate carrots and beets roots from their tops before storing to preserve freshness. A few exceptions . . .

Potatoes 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.

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.

RECIPES ON OUR WEBSITE

- Italian Antipasto Salad with Fennel (we made this at a potluck on Friday, COMPLETELY delicious!)
- Cream of Roasted Fennel Soup
- Chow Mein - thanks for the recipe Angie!
- Cucumber Yogurt Soup

RECIPES FROM LAST WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

- Caramelized Fennel and Onion
- Stir Fry Ginger Beef (use broccoli or cauliflower)
- Fennel and Apple Slaw

Braised Fennel with Olives

Slice a fennel bulb and a small onion into ¼ inch pieces. Film the bottom of a sauté pan with some oil, and set it over medium heat. Sauté the onion and the fennel until they are tender but not overly soft. Add a handful of kalamata olives and a splash of lemon or orange juice, and cook a minute or two. Serve warm or at room temp.

RECIPES

Cucumber-Parsley Salad Recipe

Adapted from www.cookthink.com

- 2 or 3 medium cucumbers
- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 T. red or white wine vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley

Peel the cucumbers, split them in half lengthwise, scrape out the seeds, and slice thinly. In a bowl, toss with salt and set aside for 10 minutes. Squeeze cucumber slices gently to remove excess moisture. Toss the drained slices with the olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, garlic and a sprinkling of salt and pepper. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes. Toss in the parsley.

Cauliflower Curry

Adapted from www.101Cookbooks.com

- 1 c. coconut milk
- 1 - 2 T. curry powder
- scant ½ t. salt (sea salt is great)
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium garlic clove, chopped
- 1/3 c. water
- 4 ounces firm tofu, cut into small cubes (optional, could also use cooked chicken, beef or pork)
- 1 c. green beans, cut into 1-inch segments
- 2 c. cauliflower, cut into tiny florets
- 1/3 c. cashews, toasted (omit if you cannot have nuts)
- a handful of parsley, finely chopped

Bring half of the coconut milk to a simmer in a large skillet or pot over medium-high heat. Whisk in the curry powder and salt, working out any clumps. Now stir in the chopped onion and garlic and cook for a minute. Stir in the remaining coconut milk and the water, and then the tofu or cooked meat. Cook down the liquid for a couple minutes before adding the green beans and cauliflower. Cover and simmer for just about one minute, maybe two - or just until the cauliflower and beans lose their raw edge and cook through a bit. Remove the pot from heat and stir in the cashews. Taste and adjust the seasoning (salt/curry powder) if needed. Serve with a bit of parsley topping each bowl.

Barley, Fennel and Beet Salad

Adapted from BonAppetit.com

- 2 c. cooked barley (from about ⅔ cup dried)
- 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 2 small beets, very thinly sliced
- ½ small onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ c. chopped toasted almonds
- 2 T. minced parsley
- ¼ c. olive oil
- 3 T. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Toss barley, fennel bulb, beets, red onion, almonds, and parsley in a large bowl with oil and vinegar; season with salt and pepper.

Braised Red Cabbage with Bacon

Adapted from www.chow.com

- 1 head red cabbage
- 6 slices smoked bacon
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 T. brown sugar
- 2 T. Dijon mustard
- 1/3 c. cider vinegar
- 1 c. chicken or vegetable broth

Slice cabbage in half lengthwise and cored the cabbage. Slice both pieces in half again so you have 4 quarters, then thinly slice each piece crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick strips. Set aside. Place bacon in a large Dutch oven or other large, heavy-bottomed pot with a tight-fitting lid over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned and most of the fat has rendered. Add onion and stir to coat in the bacon fat. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and cook until the onion softens and the edges begin to brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the reserved cabbage, stir to coat in bacon fat, and cook until the cabbage begins to wilt, about 4 minutes. Stir in the brown sugar and mustard. Deglaze the pan with the cider vinegar, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a spatula. Add the chicken broth and season with a few pinches of salt and more freshly ground pepper. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium low and cover the pan tightly. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is soft and soupy and the bacon is tender, about 45 minutes. If the cabbage begins to look dry, add more broth or water.