



CHRONICLES OF A DRIFTER

CSA NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 12, 2014

IN YOUR BOX THIS WEEK . . .

Basil

Flavorful addition to sauces and salads.

Beans: Strike or Provider

Beans are winding down - enjoy while they last!

Broccoli: Imperial

Check out the simple Broccoli Fries recipe on our website.

Cantaloupe: Halona**Carrots: Mokum**

Beef and carrot curry, ginger carrot scones, carrot waffles, carrot juice . . . such a versatile veg! 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****Potatoes: Baby Red Norland**

Baby red potatoes have a tender skin and need to be eaten sooner than storage potatoes.

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 Tomatoes

The tomatoes are coming in slowly due to chillier than normal weather but they are here to stay now.

Watermelon: Red or Yellow

Testing for ripeness is a delicate dance . . . dried first tendrils 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!

PHENOLOGY AND WEATHER NOTES ON THE FARM FROM THE PAST WEEK

Rainfall: 0.6"

High Temp: 81°F

Low Temp: 55°F

Sightings: Salamander slowly creeping by the greenhouse. Super Moon - we even had to wake Abe up to let him see the moon because it was SO beautiful.

WEEK 9: NOT ENOUGH TIME

Mid-August . . . school is just around the corner, families are trying to squeeze in one last vacation, work picks up, it just seems like there isn't enough time to do what you want to do in your day. And HOW can you find time to cook a good meal?! We feel your pain. This is a beautiful time of year but time does seem to slip away. This week's recipes focus on simple, fast, yet tasty recipes that will put some fine meals on your table without a heap of time in the kitchen.

A go-to recipe this time of year for us is a quick fresh tomato sauce served over grains or pasta. Proven meal ready in 15 minutes flat made by one parent with one doting 3-year old and one wailing, hungry infant. We call this DTH (dirty, tired and hungry) in our household. The family crew comes in at 5:15pm after sorting tomatoes and melons together for the last two hours . . . punctuated by tossing new and exciting toys into the pack and play (read: cucumber, melon and unopened bag of chips that has now been man-handled into crumbs). A meal needs to be on the table by 5:30pm or chaos breaks loose. Put on some pasta or couscous to cook. Chop tomatoes, basil, avocado if you have it, and onions. When pasta or couscous is done cooking, toss with the chopped veggies and herbs, add a dash of olive oil, sea salt and pepper. Top with feta or parmesan if desired. Done - meal served! Finish off the meal with a slice of melon and calm resumes. While the pasta is cooking there is even time to boil and blend some carrots for the little one for dinner. The review from our munchkin critic . . . "Mmm, thanks for the tasty meal mama. This is good, good!"

Though the calendar says mid-August we have been feeling like it is early or mid-September around here. The unusually cool weather has made the summer crops like peppers and tomatoes VERY slow in coming. Beyond standing at the end of the rows of plants and cheering, "Come on guys, you can do it!" we have very little control over their ripening. Hopefully things will pick up soon so we can put more of these crops in your boxes soon. The broccoli, however, has loved this weather, and somehow the melons have made an appearance though they are also heat lovers. Speaking of melons, eat your cantaloupe soon as it is RIPE and ready to go. We have to harvest the melons daily or they over ripen in an instant. An innocent bystander watching the melon harvest would probably wonder what was going on. Lots of thumping for just the right melon sound, getting close to the ground, turning melons over, tossing melons from one crew member inside the field to another crew member outside the field with a tennis-like grunt. It is an entertaining several hours each week. Enjoy the fruits of our labor!

-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!

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

- Whole Wheat Carrot Cinnamon Waffles
- Open Face Pesto Sandwich with Roasted Eggplant
- Cream of Celery Soup with Bacon
- Broccoli Fries

RECIPES FROM LAST WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

- Oven Roasted Potatoes and Green Beans

Roasted Eggplant, Squash and Onions

Adapted from fullbellyfarm.com
This is a nice side dish with burgers or fish. Also a good topper on grains like quinoa or farro.

The fast, easy, delicious way to prepare eggplant, squash or onions is to roast them in the oven, or grill them if you have a grill. Trim off the stems of the eggplant (no need to peel) and slice it at least 1/2 inch thick. Cut the onions into quarters and the squash lengthwise into two. Don't make the pieces too small - they will dry out! Generously sprinkle olive oil and salt over all of the vegetables. If you are roasting, arrange the vegetables in an oiled, shallow pan. Preheat the oven or the grill to 400. Put the vegetables in the oven and watch them carefully. They may cook at different speeds. The eggplant is done when it is soft inside and browned on the surface. The onions will take longer.

RECIPES

Green Bean and Bacon Vinaigrette

Adapted from www.realsimple.com

Salt and black pepper

1 lb green beans, trimmed

3-6 slices bacon

½ c. onion, sliced

1 T. cider vinegar

1 T. whole-grain mustard

1 T. olive oil

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add 1 t. salt. Add the green beans and cook until just tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain and run under cold water to cool; transfer to a serving bowl.

Meanwhile, in a medium skillet, cook the bacon over medium heat until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes; transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Let cool, then break into pieces.

Discard all but 1 tablespoon of the bacon drippings from the skillet and return to medium heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the vinegar, mustard, oil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Add to the green beans, along with the bacon, and toss to combine.

Summery Cous Cous Salad

This is a recipe that Nick's mom makes for us for summer lunches and it is an absolute favorite. It is very simple and flavorful and a nice cool salad for this warm week. You could also add lightly steamed broccoli to this dish. This dish is also easily adaptable as a pasta salad rather than a cous cous salad.

1 box couscous (10 oz. or about 1 ½ cups bulk couscous)

6 oz. marinated artichoke hearts, drain and reserve liquid

¼-1/3 c. finely chopped onion

1 15 oz. can garbanzo beans

1 cucumber, cut in small chunks (you can peel and seed the cucumbers if desired)

1 c. cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered

¼ c. chopped fresh basil

1 roasted chicken breast, cut into small pieces

1 lemon, juiced

½ c. olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Feta cheese (optional)

Cook couscous (if using bulk couscous, the ratio is 1 c. couscous to 1 ¼ c. water). Bring water to a boil, stir in couscous, take off the heat, let couscous absorb water for about 5 minutes. Add artichokes, scallions, garbanzo beans, cucumber, chicken, and fresh herbs. Combine lemon juice and artichoke heart liquid. Whisk in olive oil. Add to couscous. Season with salt and pepper. Add feta cheese if using. Chill.

Smashed Red Potatoes with Basil

Adapted from www.finecooking.com

1 ½ - 2 lb. red potatoes, scrubbed and cut into large chunks, 1-1/2 to 2 inches

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 c. olive oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 c. finely chopped fresh basil leaves

3/4 c. freshly grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Put the potatoes and 1 tsp. salt in a large saucepan or pot and fill with enough cold water to cover the potatoes by about 1 inch. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to maintain a steady simmer, cover the pot partially, and cook until the potatoes are quite tender when tested with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Reserve some of the cooking water and then drain the potatoes. Dump them back in the pot and set over medium heat. Dry the potatoes by shaking the pan and stirring until most of the moisture has steamed off, about 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat. Using the side of a large metal spoon, cut through the skins and flesh of the potatoes, reducing the chunks to a very coarse mash. Stir in the olive oil and garlic. Add up to a couple of tablespoons of the cooking water to loosen the mash if necessary. Stir in the basil and cheese (if using). Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Watermelon Lemonade

Adapted from the Smitten Kitchen blog

Makes enough to fill two glasses with ice cubes. Easily doubled, tripled or quadrupled - yum!

¼ c. fresh-squeezed lemon juice

½ c. fresh watermelon puree, strained through a coarse strainer to remove seeds

3 T. simple syrup (see instructions below)

¾ c. cold water and/or sparkling water

Stir it all together and serve over ice. Garnish it with a thin watermelon or lemon wedge, if you're feeling fancy. **Simple Syrup:** Simmer one part water with one part sugar (I did a cup of each and ended up with more than I needed for a quadruple batch) until sugar has dissolved. Let cool. Use less sugar if desired.