



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

Season 6, Week 11

August 18, 2011

Farmer's Notebook

Upon arriving for harvest Thursday morning, Shelby noted that fall was in the air. Indeed, although it is only mid-August the temperatures are cooling, humidity is low, and it is dark out when we start harvest. It is also now the halfway point of the CSA season, a good time for another crop update on what we're expecting the rest of the season.

As mentioned last week, this seems to be the year of the onion. We will be picking our storage onions this week for curing, and deliveries for the rest of the season will contain some variety of allium (onion) including red, sweet, storage, leeks and garlic. Our beets are also doing very well, and carrots, though slow to arrive, are coming on strong.

The tomato crop is at peak now, but it appears that despite the good weather, late blight has hit and we might see a rapid decline in tomato harvest. But the peppers are turning color, and with the quantity out there, we should enjoy them until frost. Eggplant is continuing to come in fits, but the tomatillo plants are loaded (though do we really want more tomatillos?)

Our small sweet corn crop survived the crows and everyone should get at least 1 week, but the melon crop is a total loss (melons have never done well on this farm). Speaking of which, where are the *%\$ cucumbers? Our first planting was hit early with the CMV virus, and our second planting now has signs of it, but we're hoping to get a few weeks out of it before the vines die. Summer squash has also had disease issues but the second planting looks better and is starting to produce.

As is the theme for this season, the fall crops are a bit of a mixed bag. Most of our winter squash looks great, but the jack-o'-lantern crop will be light. The kale, cauliflower, and broccoli crops are doing well but growing slowly. Hopefully some cooler, wetter weather will give them a jump. It will also give a boost to the 500+ heads of lettuce in the field which are sizing up nicely. Though always at the whim of mother nature, right now the second half of the season looks to be considerably better than the first.

This Week's Harvest

Beets – shares include either traditional red or a specialty striped variety called Chioggia.

Dill (*large shares*) – this summer herb pairs well with beets, potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers and fish.

Hot Peppers – a mix including cayenne, pepino and jalapeño.

Lettuce – after a brief hiatus during the peak heat, head lettuce returns along with the cooler weather.

Sweet Corn – smaller and later than conventionally-grown corn because our seed is not treated with fungicide or chemical fertilizers. Also, some ears are not full due to incomplete pollination. The sugars in corn convert to starch very quickly, so eat it as soon as possible after picking. Refrigerate in plastic bag for up to 2 days.

Sweet Onions – because these have been drying partially in the field they may appear to be cured like storage onions, but they still require refrigeration.

Red Cabbage – small, softball-sized heads from the spring planting. Store in fridge for a week or so. Trim and discard the stem and core, rinse leaves well.

Also...

Green Beans (*Large Shares*) ~ **Sweet Peppers** ~ **Tomatoes** ~ **Zucchini or Eggplant or Okra** ~ **Cherry Tomatoes** ~ **Tomatillos (*large shares*)**

Fruit Shares – **Blueberries** from Stanton's Farm in Feura Bush. Store in fridge, wash before eating. Extra blueberries are very easy to freeze – simply wash, dry and pop into a freezer bag. *Conventionally grown*

Coming Attractions

- Carrots
- Purple Beans
- Nectarines (Fruit Shares)



Recipe of the Week: Rachel's Sunshine Muffins

This is one of my staple recipes, a fail-safe that I know everyone in the house will gobble up. Those following our on-line Member forum know it was part of an attempt to sneak some extra vegetables into our breakfast this past weekend. I use different fruits in here depending on what's in season – raspberries in the spring, peaches in high summer, apples or pears in the fall. The recipe is quite flexible and I encourage you to try different items of your choice.

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- 1/3 cup cane sugar or honey
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ cup shredded zucchini
- ½ cup shredded carrot
- 1 peach, diced *or* mashed
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ½ cup raisins
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup cooking oil

Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. In a separate bowl combine milk, egg and oil; stir in remaining items. add to dry ingredients and stir just until moistened – the batter will be just a bit lumpy.

Fill lightly-greased or lined muffin tins about 2/3 full with batter. If desired, sprinkle top of each muffin with a little cinnamon-sugar. Bake at 400° F for about 20 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.



Another Recipe: Moroccan Eggplant Salad



A recipe from Joyce Goldstein's The Mediterranean Kitchen. Mediterranean is the perfect cuisine for the high summer crops we are enjoying now. This recipe should make enough for 3-4 people and could be easily doubled for a larger group.

- 1 large or 2 smaller eggplants
- ½ onion, diced
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tbs ground cumin
- 1 tsp paprika
- pinch of cayenne pepper (or small amount finely minced fresh hot pepper)
- 2 tbs+ lemon juice
- 6 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 2 ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1 sweet red pepper, roasted and cut into strips
- 2 tbs fresh chopped parsley
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat oven to 450° F. Prick each eggplant several times with a fork. Lay whole eggplants on a baking sheet and roast in oven about 40-45 minutes, until tender but not mushy. remove from oven and let stand until cool, then peel and cut flesh into 1 1/2"-sized cubes. Place cubed eggplant in a colander and allow to drain, then transfer to a bowl.

In a food processor or blender, combine onion, garlic, spices and lemon juice. Puree and pour resulting liquid over the eggplant. Add the olive oil, roasted red pepper strips, tomatoes and parsley to the bowl. Use your hands to mix gently, being sure not to break down the tender eggplant cubes. Season with salt and pepper, and a bit more lemon juice if desired, to taste.

Mark Your Calendars: Harvest Home Celebration

Sunday October 2nd
Time - TBA

Celebrate the final weeks of the CSA season with a hay ride, pumpkin-picking, preserve-tasting and other seasonal activities. More details to follow soon!