



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Spring 2016

Harvest list is online

Greens with Pine Nuts and Currants
Cilantro Chutney
Roasted Green Beans
Cold Borscht
Spicy Kale with White Beans and Orzo

Many more recipes on our website

Josh's Chickens

Josh's whole frozen fryers have arrived! Get them at the front desk. We also have chicken feet and chicken livers.

Pale green Armenian Cucumber



Striped Armenian Cucumber



Armenian Cucumbers

If you're new to the Tucson CSA, you may get somewhat perplexed by these strange-looking cucumbers that showed up in our Tuesday's shares. They certainly don't look like the tame, unobtrusive cucumbers you're used to seeing in the supermarket! And their striped varieties go limp so quickly in the refrigerator! But not true! Appearances can be deceiving!

We are privileged to receive from Farmer Frank what are known as Armenian cucumbers, well adapted to our desert climate conditions. They come in two varieties: the pale green ribbed variety and the darker green striped and crooked variety. Not surprisingly, the latter is also known as snake melon. The online Cook's Thesaurus (www.foodsubs.com) notes they are "hard to find, but one of the best-regarded slicing cucumbers." Not hard to find for us! We often get plenty of them and they grow larger and larger throughout the summer.

According to a report by the Environmental Working Group, commercial cucumbers are one of the top twelve most pesticide-laden produce items. The wax applied to commercial cucumbers, apples, and many other produce items is made of petroleum oils. Not only does it seal in moisture, prolonging shelf life, it also seals in pesticides.

Because Crooked Sky Farms' Armenian cucumbers are grown organically and are wax-free, they don't need to be peeled, and despite their naturally limp appearance, you'll notice that they're still crisp when sliced. As soon as you slice one, the perfumed aroma begs you to take a bite. And when you do, you won't be disappointed. You'll be amazed at how little it resembles the flavorless, tough-skinned varieties you're used to. You could use slices of this cucumber to perfume and brighten mixed drinks, lemonade, or even plain water, or simply eat it with a light sprinkling of salt.

Aphid Season

Spring always brings its share of aphids to farms and gardens. Aphids are those pesky little translucent insects, often green, that like to feed on the sap of brassicas such as collards, kale and cabbages. If left unchecked they can destroy crops, but usually they get controlled by predator insects such as ladybugs and lacewings. But it takes a while for this to happen and sometimes the aphid never get eliminated completely.



If aphids bother you, think about this: they're there because your crops are grown organically. They would not be there if, for example, your kale had been sprayed with pesticides. So, they're a sign that your produce is better than the pesticide version. Once you have nailed the right response to finding aphids in your greens, simply make sure to eliminate them: just swish your greens vigorously in a bowl of water to which you have added a squirt dishwashing liquid. Rub the leaves with your fingers to get rid of the tenacious ones. Make sure to also rinse the greens in clean water afterward to eliminate the traces of dishwashing liquid.

Greens with Pine Nuts and Currants

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Greens are often accompanied by currants and pine nuts in a wide range of dishes. Here is the basic recipe, with much room for creativity. (Think pasta or grain salad, lasagna, empanadas, ...)

2 large bunches of greens, chopped roughly
1/4 cup pine nuts
2 tablespoons oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup currants
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil over medium high heat, add onion, sauté for about 5 minutes then add chard, pine nuts, raisins and a splash of water. Cook, stirring often, until chard is well wilted. Season with salt and pepper and a dash of balsamic vinegar, if desired.

Cilantro Chutney

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA

1 bunch cilantro, washed and drained
1/4 cup chopped green onion
1 teaspoon cumin seeds (or powder)
1 green chile, minced (if desired)
Juice from 1 lemon
1 teaspoon salt
Yogurt

Chop cilantro and place in a blender with onion, cumin, chile, salt, and lemon juice. Blend to a smooth paste. Taste and add a bit of yogurt if desired to mellow the bite of the onion. Chill at least one hour to allow the flavors to blend and mellow.

Roasted Green Beans

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The high heat and long cooking time makes the beans tender and brings out their flavor. Add any spices you might like. You want to get a nice browning around the edges of the beans.

1 share fresh beans
1 tablespoon olive oil
Drizzle balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Toss the beans with the oil, vinegar and salt and pepper. Spread on a baking sheet and cook in the oven at 400° for about 15-20 minutes, stirring once or twice. Sprinkle with more salt and pepper if needed, and serve warm.

Cold Borscht

Liz Kennedy, Tucson CSA

2 quarts of water
8 large beets
1/4 cup sugar
1 big onion
1 tablespoon salt (or less if you don't like a lot of salt, my father did but I don't)
Juice of 4 lemons, or less depending on the size
Sour cream or light sour cream

Bring water to boil. Add remaining ingredients except for the sour cream. Simmer for 1 hour or until beets are very tender. Discard the onion. Peel beets and put them into a blender or food processor. Pour the cooking liquid in and blend (I find I need to do it in several batches). My Dad would mix two spoons of sour cream during the blending process, but I don't. I prefer to add a tablespoon of sour cream in each bowl when I serve it. Each diner can mix in his/her sour cream. In any case serve cold for lunch or as a first course for dinner. You won't believe how it will cool you down.

Spicy Kale with White Beans and Orzo

Kusuma Rao, www.Ruchikala.com

4 ounces orzo pasta
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
4 garlic cloves, grated finely on a microplane
1 bunch of kale, coarsely chopped
1 cup cooked white beans (such as cannellini, white kidney, navy or garbanzos)
Shaved Parmigiano Reggiano or Asiago cheese
Juice and zest of 1 lemon

Cook the pasta: Cook the orzo pasta in heavily salted water. Drain the pasta just before the pasta is al dente. Drain, reserving 1/4 cup of the pasta water in a separate cup for later use. Toss the drained pasta with two tablespoons of olive oil, toss to coat, ensuring the pasta is thoroughly coated. Set aside. In a large skillet, add a tablespoon of olive oil to the pan on low heat along with the crushed red pepper. Allow the peppers to infuse the oil for 1-2 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for about 25 seconds. Increase to medium-high heat and add kale. Saute for 1-2 minutes with a hearty pinch of salt, cook until the kale turns bright green and just starts to gently wilt. Add white beans, another pinch of salt, as well as lemon juice and zest. Add pasta water, stir to combine. Turn off the heat. Add orzo pasta, stir to combine. To serve: top with shaved Parmesan or Asiago as well as (optional) a fresh drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.