



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

December 13, 2005 – Issue 15

**Winter 05
Week 2 of 12**

Recipes in this Issue

Roasted Sunchokes

Sautéed Sunchokes with Sunflower
Seeds

Wine-Glazed Sunchokes with
Rosemary

Tatsoi with Sesame Oil Vinaigrette
Cilantro Pesto



*Are we whetting your appetite?
Pictured are Black Mesa Ranch's
chocolate truffles, made with ultra-
fresh cream from its own certified
dairy; and crispy, thick, incredibly
fresh, butter almond toffee covered
with dark, milk, or white chocolate.
Both candies are award winners.*

TCSA Contact

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We welcome your suggestions,
comments, contributions, and
questions:

www.tucsoncsa.org

Yum! Handmade Candy from Black Mesa Ranch

In response to member requests and just in time for upcoming celebrations, the TCSA will be selling BMR's award-winning hand-crafted chocolate candy: Dark Debris, Milky Rubble, Butter Almond Toffee, Caramels, and Truffles. The candy will be available on next week's pick-up day, December 20.

Sudden Freeze Burns Some of Our Crops

Don't be put off by the less-than-bright-looking cilantro and radish tops in this week's share. Last Friday night, the temperature plummeted dramatically—50 degrees in a single night! As a result, the cilantro, Swiss chard, and radish tops all suffered sudden and mild freeze-burn before they had an opportunity to acclimate to colder temperatures. We lost a lot of Swiss chard, but the cilantro and radish tops in this week's share are fully usable, if not as pretty as they usually are. Normally, if given more time to acclimate to gradually colder temperatures, the plants naturally harden and can withstand frost.

From Field to Table: Crooked Sky Farm News

Farmer Frank currently employs 12 farm hands to help in the fields. It is an ongoing struggle, however, for him to find people to work on the farm. Few people are prepared to put in the hard work that farming requires. Although Frank pays them well (\$8 to \$30 per hour depending on experience), provides them with year-round employment and health insurance, and sometimes even helps to pay their rent, workers often leave the farm after only a few months—and sometimes even after only a few weeks. He continually must find new helpers, and they often require time-consuming training from scratch.

In addition, organic farming is more labor-intensive than conventional farming because it doesn't have the benefit of a chemical arsenal to help control crop growth. It also requires a more intimate knowledge of the many plants that are grown in the fields as well as an understanding of weather patterns, insect cycles, plant interactions, weeding and low-till practices, and many other methods specifically used in organic farming.

New Book—Harvest for Hope: A Guide to Mindful Eating

Jane Goodall, known for her work with chimpanzees and baboons, turns to the food we eat and how it reaches our tables. She dedicates her book "to the thousands of small farmers who are valiantly struggling to survive, especially those who have embraced organic practices." Chapters of particular note to CSA members include "How We Lost Commonsense Farming," "Taking Back Our Food," "Protecting Our Family Farmers," and "Eat Local, Eat Seasonal." Goodall discusses "death by monoculture" (single-crop farming), the hazards of genetically modified foods, the disappearance of seed diversity, and what we as individuals can do to combat these seemingly overwhelming macro-trends. She celebrates restaurants and grocery stores that seek out locally grown produce, and she honors small farmers. The book has received endorsements from Alice Waters, founder of the Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, and Deborah Madison, author of *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* and *Local Flavors*. Learn more at www.harvestforhope.com or see it for yourself at Antigone Books, 411 N. Fourth Ave., right around the corner from the CSA.

Jerusalem Artichokes (Sunchoke or Sunroots)

Adapted from Deborah Madison, *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* and *Local Flavors*

A true North American native first cultivated by Native Americans, the Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is neither from Jerusalem nor an artichoke. A more accurate name is *sunchoke* or *sunroot*, because these tubers are the root of a perennial sunflower plant. They have a sweet, nutty flavor, and they're delightfully crisp, like water chestnuts, but during cooking they can quickly and unpredictably turn mushy, so they demand a watchful eye. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and scrub them vigorously rather than peel them. (Ours do not arrive washed, because they keep longer that way.) Sunchoke can be eaten raw, cooked in winter soups and stews, roasted, and sautéed. They can also be difficult to digest, so start eating them gradually. Avoid cooking them in cast iron, which causes them to discolor. Nut oils are very flattering to sunchoke. One pound is enough for four to six servings.

Roasted Sunchoke

Serves 4 to 6

1 pound sunchoke, sliced into ½-inch rounds or left whole
1 to 2 tablespoons sunflower seed oil
Salt and freshly milled pepper
A few rosemary or thyme sprigs

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Toss the sunchoke with the oil and ½ teaspoon salt. Bake them in a shallow gratin dish with the herb for 20 to 30 minutes. Pierce them with the tip of a knife—they should be mostly tender but offer some resistance. Season with pepper.

Sautéed Sunchoke with Sunflower Seeds

Serves 4 to 6

1 pound sunchoke, sliced into ¼-inch rounds
2 tablespoons sunflower seed oil
Salt and freshly milled pepper
3 tablespoons toasted sunflower seeds
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 teaspoon chopped thyme

Sauté the sunchoke in the oil in a large skillet over high heat until lightly browned and tender but still a bit crisp. Taste them as they cook; they can be done in 5 minutes or as long as 10. Season with salt and pepper, add the sunflower seeds, parsley, and thyme, and toss well.

Wine-Glazed Sunchoke with Rosemary

Serves 4

1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound sunchoke, sliced into rounds
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
Salt and freshly milled pepper
2 teaspoons chopped rosemary
½ cup dry white wine

Heat the oil in a wide skillet. Add the sunchoke and garlic and sauté for about 1-1/2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, add the rosemary and wine, and continue to cook over high heat until the wine is reduced to a few tablespoons. Add 1 tablespoon water, cover, and cook for a minute more or until tender-crisp. Although they can turn mushy in an instant, it can also take as long as 10 minutes before they're done. Boil the excess liquid, if any, down to a glaze.

Tatsoi

Tatsoi is an Asian salad green used in salads, soups and stir-fry dishes. Tatsoi has small, dark-green spoon-shaped leaves with a mild mustard flavor, similar to bok choy.

Tatsoi with Sesame Oil Vinaigrette

Adapted from Deborah Madison, *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

Tiny spoon-shaped tatsoi leaves make an unusual salad, especially with the addition of fragrant dark sesame oil. If your tatsoi is not so small and tender, combine it with mixed salad greens and use it as an accent.

8 cups Tatsoi leaves
2 scallions, including some of the greens, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon thinly sliced garlic chives or regular chives
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
2 tablespoons sesame oil
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Sort through the greens, then trim, wash, and dry them well. Toss the greens with the scallions and chives. In another bowl, whisk together the vinegar, oils, and salt. Taste the dressing on a leaf and adjust the oil or vinegar if necessary. Pour over the salad, toss well, add the sesame seeds, toss again, and serve. Serves 4

Cilantro Pesto

Cooks.com

1 bunch cilantro
3 cloves garlic
½ cup olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup pine nuts or walnuts

Wash cilantro and dry. Mix ingredients in food processor until smooth. Chill and serve with fish or pasta as a sauce or as a vegetable dip. Leftovers keep in the refrigerator for several days or can be frozen in separately packed small portions, such as the ice-cube tray method below:

Spoon pesto into an ice-cube tray (2 tablespoons per cube) and cover with plastic wrap. Freeze overnight, then transfer cubes to a resealable plastic bag; keep up to 6 months. Defrost pesto at room temperature about 20 minutes.