



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

February 28, 2006 – Issue 25

Winter 05
Week 12 of 12

This Week's Share

Neck pumpkins
Navel oranges
Broccoli
Salad mix
Lunar white carrots
Flowering kale
Black Spanish radishes
Arugula

Recipes in this Issue

Neck pumpkin purée
Amish pumpkin pie
Black radish noodle soup
Steamed baby carrots with their greens



Philippe with one of the kids from Black Mesa Ranch in Snowflake, Arizona, which supplies the Tucson CSA with goat cheese.

TCSA Contact

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We welcome your suggestions, contributions, and questions:

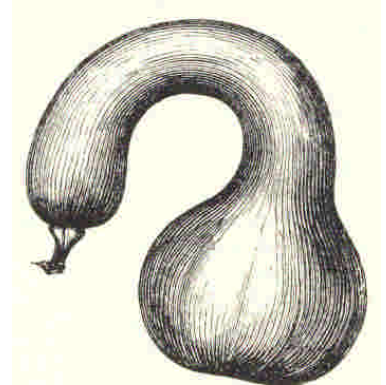
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LAST PICKUP! RENEW TODAY (OR BY MAIL BY FRIDAY)

Neck pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata*) is an heirloom, buff-colored winter squash with a long, curved neck. It can get as long as 3 feet. This unusual variety is a close cousin of the butternut squash, only sweeter. It has thick, dry, sweet, orange flesh which is excellent mashed and the top choice by Amish cooks for pies due to its sweetness.

NUTRITION Pumpkin is rich with vitamins: 1 cup of cooked pumpkin has only 49 calories, along with 37 mg of calcium. It is rich in beta-carotene, which current research indicates may reduce the risk of developing heart disease and certain types of cancer.

Cooked squash freezes well. Pack into freezer containers or bags, leaving ½ inch head space, and freeze up to one year.



The **black Spanish radish** (*Raphanus sativus*) was the mainstay radish of American farmers throughout the nineteenth century, according to William

Woys Weaver (*Heirloom Vegetable Gardening*). It was originally grown for winter storage. In the spring, after sweeter roots such as carrots, turnips, and celeriac had been eaten up, the black Spanish radish would be ready and waiting. The harsh mustardy flavor would be gone and the taste would be clean, crisp, and mild.



Black radishes can be almost as pungent as horseradish, and are firm and rather dry. In many parts of Russia or in Russian (particularly Jewish) households throughout the world, black radishes are enjoyed as an appetizer, but rarely eaten straight. They are either coarsely shredded or sliced thin, salted to mellow the bite, then rinsed, drained, and bound with sour cream or chicken fat. This unlikely and delicious duo is usually offered with pumpernickel or chewy sour rye bread.

Black radishes taste like firm, rather strong turnips when **cooked**, but their cooking time is less predictable, ranging from 10 to 25 minutes, depending on how long the radish has been stored or how dense its flesh. Sliced, diced, or shredded, they add a piquancy to soups, stews, braises, or stir-fries. Or chop fine to add to meatball or meatloaf mixtures.

If you are going to serve the radishes **raw**, they are excellently simply grated into a salad. If too spicy for you, they may need a preliminary salting to tame the bite and harshness. Using about 1 teaspoon salt per 1-1/4 cups chopped, shredded, sliced, or julienned radish, toss the two together to mix well. Cover the surface of the vegetable (not the bowl) closely with plastic, then overlap and seal the edges of the container (the smell is fierce). Set a weight on top of the radish and let stand for an hour or longer. Rinse, drain, and dry.

The **Lunar white carrot** is a new carrot variety with creamy white roots; a deliciously mild, sweet flavor; and a small core. Carrots used to come in many colors until the Dutch in the seventeenth century bred the carrot orange to honor their national color. White carrots were grown in the Middle Ages, but now they have become very rare. Novelty colored carrots are coming back, however. The small carrots we receive are a spring special.



Neck Pumpkin Purée

2 pounds neck pumpkin
Salt and pepper
4 cloves garlic
6 sage leaves
¼ pound unsalted butter
¾ cup milk

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Cut the squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds, season the flesh with salt and pepper, and fill the cavities with the garlic cloves, peeled, and the sage leaves. Place the squashes skin side down, in a shallow ovenproof dish, and add just enough water barely to cover the bottom barely to prevent burning. Bake for about 45 minutes or until completely tender. Allow to cool. Remove and discard the garlic and sage.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter in the milk over a low flame. Scoop the squash flesh out of the skin and mash. Whisk in the milk and butter to give a soft texture to the purée. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serves 4 to 6.

Amish Pumpkin Pie

Amish pumpkin pie is spicier than conventional pumpkin pie.

3 eggs
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup brown sugar
2 cups puréed neck pumpkin (prepare as above but without the salt, pepper, garlic, and sage, and without finishing by mashing with milk and butter)
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon ground allspice
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
pinch of salt
¾ cup heavy cream
¾ cup half-and-half
1 unbaked pie crust
pecan halves for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Beat eggs and both sugars together until light. Stir in pumpkin purée, spices and salt and mix thoroughly. Stir in cream and half-and-half.
3. Pour filling into pie crust.
4. Bake pie at 450°F for 8 minutes, then reduce heat to 325°F and bake for another 40 to 45 minutes or until filling is set (a knife inserted in the center will come out clean).
5. Arrange pecan halves decoratively around the edge, pressing them lightly into the warm filling. Arrange another 5 pecans in a flower pattern in the center of the pie. Cool completely before cutting.

Black Radish Noodle Soup

The black radish's aggressive sharpness disappears in this stew-like soup by cooking it in broth.

3 medium scallions (green onions)
½ pound ground meat
1 tablespoon cornstarch
2 or 3 tablespoons sake or dry sherry
About 1 tablespoon soy sauce
¾ to 1 pound well-scrubbed, trimmed black radishes (no need to peel), shredded
1 or 2 medium carrots, sliced thin or shredded
8 cups meat or vegetable stock or broth
3 to 4 ounces skinny, short dried egg noodles

1. Mince the white part of the scallions and slice the greens. Mix the minced scallions with meat, cornstarch, 1 tablespoon sake or sherry, and soy sauce and form about 30 meatballs.
2. Combine radishes and broth in a large pot and bring to a simmer, covered. Add noodles and bring to a boil. Boil gently, stirring often, until almost tender, about 3 minutes. Add meatballs and carrots. Simmer gently until meat firms up, about 3 minutes longer.
3. Add more sake or sherry to taste, if desired. Add half of scallion greens and return to a simmer. Ladle into bowls and sprinkle with remaining scallions.

Steamed Baby Carrots with Their Greens

Raw baby carrots can be sweet, crisp, and rewarding. There is more to them, however: cooking changes them in most agreeable ways, particularly the fluffy greens. Raw, the greens can be harsh and oily, but cooked, they can mellow and soften to become an aromatic complement to the sweet root. Steaming is the best way to maintain the feathery forms and at the same time cook the carrots fully.

To prepare:

Scrub carrots and arrange on a steamer rack with their greens intact. Cover and cook until just tender in the center, from 2 to 5 minutes, depending upon their size. Test often to avoid overcooking. Serve at once.

Additional ideas for carrot greens:

- Cut the feathery parts of baby greens into salads for a vivid aroma, as you would add fennel tops or celery leaves.
- Cook greens separately to serve as a nest for seafood or vegetables. Steamed, they keep their color and shape and taste like a blend of sharp parsley and chrysanthemum, which are both relatives of the carrot.
- Stir segments of the greens into broth to add color and rich aroma.
- Make a soup with the greens (see the last issue of the newsletter online at www.tucsonca.org).