



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

May 30, 2006 – Issue 38

Spring 06
Week 13 of 13

This Week's Share

Amaranth
Red LaSoda potatoes
Texas 1015Y sweet onions
Beet or turnip
Newly harvested garlic
Corn: Silver Queen (white) and
Sweetie 82 (yellow)
Mixed heirloom tomatoes
Mixed summer squash
Romaine lettuce

Recipes in this Issue

Basic Steamed Amaranth
Steamed Amaranth with Chili Oil,
Soy Sauce, and Sesame
Wilted Amaranth Greens
Garlicky Sauté of Amaranth and
Tomatoes
Heavenly Grilled Corn on the Cob



Silver Queen brought back the popularity of white sweet corns and is still the standard by which white sweet corns are measured.

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THIS IS THE LAST PICKUP OF THE SPRING SESSION.

Renew TODAY at the CSA or mail in your Summer session payment by June 3rd to benefit from the \$17/week rate. After June 3rd, the regular rate of \$18/week will apply. Subscription details are online.

What's New This Week: Amaranth

Amaranth is a new vegetable to many of us, although it has been eaten for centuries just about everywhere in the world. The Mexican name for amaranth, *quelite*, comes from the Nahuatl word *quelitl*, meaning "greens." There are a great many species of amaranth, all of them related to a common weed known as pigweed. The greens have a distinctive, appealing, earthy flavor somewhat like **spinach**. Weed amaranths are very common, sprouting up in the cracks of sidewalks and in vacant lots, and taste much like their domesticated cousins. Farmer Frank allows amaranth, which occurs in his fields naturally and is very prolific, to grow among his crops and act as a natural form of pest control. Bugs, whose only food source would normally be crops intended for us, munch on amaranth instead.



As with most greens, older, larger leaves tend to have a stronger flavor than small ones. Use the greens in the same ways as other salad and cooking greens. Make salads of small leaves to accompany fish, and cook the larger leaves both alone and combined with other greens to serve in pasta dishes. Unless the leaves are small, however, amaranth is better cooked. Use the stems as well as the leaves. The big, splashy leaves and stems of late-season amaranth sometimes need a preliminary parboiling. Spring and early summer amaranth, however, needs no more than routine washing before you get on with cooking. Note that amaranth does not cook down as much as spinach. **Amaranth greens wilt quickly, so eat them as soon as possible.**

Crooked Sky Farms' Corn: always ready to eat

It is not necessary to pry open the husks of an ear of corn from Crooked Sky Farms and to stick your nails in its kernels to find out if it is ready to eat or not (in fact we specifically ask that you do not follow this practice at the CSA, as it spoils the ear). As opposed to the machine-picked corn you find in most grocery stores, our corn is hand-picked by Farmer Frank and his workers: they know when an ear is ready to be picked by briefly stroking it or by merely looking at its silk. In fact they are so well tuned to it that they simply walk through the rows, at a regular walking pace, with their arm outstretched and stroke the ears as they walk past them, picking those that are ripe.

A word from Gina, one of our CSA members, currently on vacation: "Growing up in Berks County (the Pennsylvania Dutch Country) PA, in early August we always had the most wonderful corn. The season only lasted a couple of weeks but I remember eating almost nothing but "Silver Queen" corn for those weeks each year. I'd go with my mother to the Farmer's Market and pick out just the right ears, small kernels, and just picked that morning and oh, was it sweet. I've never had corn that sweet anywhere else. Wish I could have some of Farmer Frank's this week. Enjoy it for me. Gina."

Basic Steamed Amaranth

Spread 1 bunch of **amaranth** on a steamer rack over boiling water. Cover and cook until almost tender, 3 to 6 minutes. Transfer leaves to serving dish and serve hot or at room temperature, with a cruet of **full-flavored olive oil**, a dish of **coarse sea salt**, and **lemon wedges**.

Steamed Amaranth with Chili Oil, Soy Sauce, and Sesame

Season the steamed amaranth (as above) with ½ teaspoon **chili oil** or **Asian (dark) sesame oil** and 1 tablespoon **soy sauce**. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon toasted **sesame seeds**.

Wilted Amaranth Greens

Amaranth is such an interesting green that a favorite approach is to cook it quickly, although its robust flavor and texture stand up to long cooking as well. You can proceed along two lines. Sizzle a few slivers of **garlic** in **olive oil**, follow with a healthy pinch of **salt**, and then add the greens. Cover for a minute to let the greens wilt down, then keep tossing until the leaves and stems are tender and no longer taste raw.

A second, pan-Asian treatment is to use **peanut or corn oil**, into which you toss finely sliced or shredded **ginger**, either alone or with a few slivers of **garlic**; a **dry red chili** or two; and then the salt and greens, proceeding as before.

Garlicky Sauté of Amaranth and Tomatoes *(ensalada de bledo blanco)*

Serve with grilled meat or with a toss of rice, beans, and corn for a meatless meal. The cumin, allspice, and sesame all subtly underscore the amaranth, so don't omit them.

1 bunch amaranth
1 CSA portion tomatoes, seeded and diced if large
6 medium scallions (green onions), thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
Pepper
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 to 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

1. In a very large skillet, heat 3 tablespoons oil over fairly low heat. Add garlic and stir until light golden. Add scallions, tomatoes, salt, pepper, allspice, and cumin. Raise heat to moderately high and sauté until tomatoes are juice and tender but not soft, about 2 minutes.
2. Add amaranth leaves. With tongs, turn to mix evenly with tomato mixture. Stir and twist leaves constantly until they barely wilt, a minute or two. Turn off heat. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil and 1 teaspoon vinegar. Taste and add more vinegar and pepper if needed. Scoop into dish. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve hot.

Heavenly Grilled Corn on the Cob

Heidi DeCosmo, TCSA member

This is a great way to enjoy fresh corn. The kernels will steam in the husks and foil, and the grill adds a smoky flavor. Try adding chili spice, thyme, or curry powder in place of paprika.

4 ears corn	2 teaspoons paprika
4 teaspoons butter	1 teaspoon ground pepper
2 tablespoons honey	1 teaspoon sea salt

Heat the grill to medium-high. Carefully peel back the husks and remove the silk from each ear. Rub 1 teaspoon butter on each ear of corn. Drizzle the honey on the corn and sprinkle with the paprika, pepper and salt. Wrap the husks back around the corn. Cover each ear of corn with aluminum foil.

Place the corn on the grill. Close the lid and cook for 5 minutes. Turn the ears over with tongs and cook 5 minutes more. Turn corn one more time and finish cooking another 5 minutes. Carefully remove foil and pull back husks to serve.