



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

September 26, 2006 – Issue 55 (also available online)

Fall 06
Week 4 of 13

This Week's Harvest

Eggplant or acorn squash
Trucker's Delight sweet corn
(This is the last corn we'll receive for about another month.)
Tomatoes *(They're starting to get red now!)*
Cucumbers
Apples
Braising mix *(check last week's newsletter for recipes)*
Tomatillos
Melon

Recipes

Salsa Verde
Fried Green Tomatoes
Green Tomato Salad
Cucumber Coconut-Milk Curry



Our mural is coming along!
TCSA volunteers Meredith and Amy handing out produce in front of Joe Silins' mural

TCSA Coordinator

Philippe Waterinckx

Newsletter Editor

Christa Selig

We welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions.

Second Monthly Payment Due by October 3

If you are making monthly payments, please make your second payment by October 3.



Invasion of the Foody Snatchers

Shopping at a farmer's market, unfortunately, is no guarantee that you're buying local. Some farmer's markets, including here in Tucson, have started allowing "peddlers," who sell produce from boxes marked as originating in California, Mexico, and other places outside of Arizona. PLU stickers are also a sure sign that what you're buying is not local. "Farmers who spend hours babying their crops believe this [practice] is misleading to consumers who think they are supporting local farmers and stimulating the local economy by shopping at the market," writes Suzi Parker in the September 21 issue of *Grist* magazine. You can read the entire article at www.grist.org/news/maindish/2006/09/21/local.

Want to supplement your CSA goodies with more local organic foods?

Check out the **Santa Cruz River Farmer's Market**, open on Thursdays from 4-7 pm and located on the west bank of the Santa Cruz River, one block south of Speedway. Last week it featured Native squashes, roasted corn, tepary beans, and green chilies from the San Xavier Coop Farm; butternut squash and native sweet corn from the Community Food Bank garden; apples and fresh eggs from Estancia Farms; Swiss chard, green bell peppers, cucumbers, butternut squash, onions, garlic from Forever Yong Farm and pure natural honey from neighboring Stockwells; multitudes of leafy greens from Arivaca Community Garden; certified organic white peaches, four varieties of apples, assorted pears from English Fruit Farm and goodies from neighboring Apple Annies.

Don't be shy about asking questions and getting to know the farmers! A genuine farmer will never shy away from questions or be annoyed at you for asking. They *want* you to get to know them and to build a relationship with you, and they have nothing to hide. Feel welcome, too, to ask questions of Farmer Frank at the CSA, if you pick up your produce on Monday evenings (he's the big guy with the cowboy hat).

A Word on Spinach

Andy Griffin of Mariquita Farm in Watsonville, California writes, "I think the FDA employee that I heard on the radio urging people to play it safe and not eat fresh spinach is ignorant. Although the victims got sick by eating spinach from a sealed bag, it's wrong to seize on spinach as the culprit in the controversy; it makes more sense to look at the processing and handling of pre-packaged greens in general [...] By fingering any spinach as suspicious, even bunched fresh spinach, the FDA isn't educating anyone, or solving the problem. They're just spreading fear on a national scale."

"Frankly, I think convenience is overrated," he continues. "Maybe giving people a mixed box of seasonal vegetables that they have to wash and prepare isn't 'convenient' the way shipping thousands of cookie-cutter boxes of salad out of a factory door is, and maybe it isn't 'convenient' for our supporters to have to wash their carrots or trim the coarse stems off their chard, but that's cooking, and cooking is a happy, healthy, balanced and therapeutic chore." Read the entire article, and why fresh, truly organic spinach isn't harmful for you, at www.ladybug.com/articles/spinach.html.

Tomatillos



The tomatillo (toe-mah-TEE-yo), or Mexican husk tomato, has a very tart flavor, not at all like a tomato. It was a prominent staple in Aztec and Mayan economies. The tomatillo is almost always cooked to develop its lemony-herbal flavor and soften its rather solid hide, but it can be used raw, for a more sharply acid flavor. Tomatillos are quite low in calories, with 100 per cup. They are a fairly good provider of vitamins C and K.

Storage: Tomatillos can be stored in the refrigerator for an astonishing length of time. They keep for close to a month with no signs of deterioration. Place them in a paper-lined dish or basket and simply let them be.

For longer storage, tomatillos **freeze** extremely well, once cooked. Husk, wash, and stem them. Place in a pot with just enough water to cover them, and simmer until softened but not squishy. Cool in the liquid, then freeze in cooking liquid in 1-cup containers for handy sauce-making (use both the fruit and liquid; do not drain).

Use: Although traditionally the tomatillo is not used raw, you might like to try it chopped in salad, in gazpacho or guacamole, or slivered or diced as a garnish for cold soups and a sandwich ingredient.

Like red tomatoes, tomatillos have great sauce-ability. Chopped or puréed, they make a tart dressing; cooked and puréed, the flavor is fuller, more mellow, and takes to all kinds of spicing and herbing.

The traditional uses of tomatillos are hard to beat: in *salsa cruda* the barely cooked fruits are combined with chile peppers, onion, garlic, cilantro, and optional seasonings for an all-purpose sauce that seems to go with everything that can be dipped or dressed. The cooked sauce enlivens tacos, cheese dishes, potatoes, huevos rancheros, or enchiladas. Blended with herbs, or pumpkin seeds, stock, or other sauce components, tomatillos are the basis for a wealth of green sauces in which chicken, turkey, fish, or vegetables are simmered.

Preparation: Tomatillos must be husked before use. Peel off the crackly husk, then wash the fruits thoroughly to remove the sticky resinous material near the stems.

Salsa Verde

Philippe

1 pound tomatillos, thoroughly rinsed and husks removed
 ½ onion
 4 cloves garlic
 Juice of 1 lime or ½ lemon
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 jalapeño
 ¼ teaspoon salt

Blend all ingredients in a food processor until slightly chunky.

Fried Green Tomatoes

Lorraine Glazar, TCSA member

Don't confuse the tomatillos (left) with actual green tomatoes!

At my house, these are like pancakes, and disappear onto someone's plate as soon as they come off the griddle!

1 to 2 tablespoons cooking fat (bacon drippings, olive oil, or canola oil)
 2 green tomatoes
 ½ cup cornmeal or masa harina
 Salt and pepper

Core the tomatoes and slice into ¼-inch slices. Heat the oil until it simmers but does not smoke. Salt and pepper each cut side of the tomato slices. Dip each cut side of the tomato slice into the cornmeal or masa, then place in hot oil. Cook the first side thoroughly over medium heat, until the crust is crispy and the tomato has begun to soften. Then turn and finish cooking the second side. Serve hot. Serves 2-3.

Editor's note: These also make great **sandwiches!** Serve on toasted sourdough rolls, focaccia squares, or other bread spread with garlic or regular mayonnaise. Add thinly sliced feta, goat cheese, or fresh mozzarella and a layer of greens, such as some greens from our braising mix or some basil.

Green Tomato Salad

Lorraine Glazar, TCSA member

Another way to enjoy green tomatoes is arranged as a salad with a topping of equal parts chopped onion, red pepper, and corn-off-the-cob (sauté in a little olive oil on the range top, and use whatever seasoning you like, or a dab of balsamic vinegar and some herbs). This salad adapts easily to what's in your share this week, and makes a nice presentation, too.

Cucumber Coconut-Milk Curry

Tony, TCSA member

½ tsp. whole cumin seeds	1-2 cucumbers, seeded and cubed
1 tsp. ground turmeric	16 ounces coconut milk
1 tsp. ground coriander	1 cardamom pod
1 tsp. ground cumin	1 inch of cinnamon stick
1 tsp. chile powder	1 bay leaf
1 tbs. ghee or butter	2 cups water
1 onion, chopped	Salt

Heat the ghee or butter in a large skillet. Add the cumin seeds and onion, and sauté until the onion is slightly caramelized.

Make a curry powder by mixing together the ground spices (turmeric, coriander, cumin, and chile powder), and add to onion mix. Sauté the curry powder in the onion mix for 5 minutes or so. Add 1 cup of water, and simmer until mixture is reduced and develops a pasty texture.

Add the cucumber and sauté for 5 more minutes. Add the coconut milk, 1 cup water, cardamom, cinnamon stick, and bay leaf. Continue to simmer until mixture thickens to a creamy consistency, 10 to 20 minutes. Add salt to taste, and serve with rice.