



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 93 ~ July 2, 2007 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 07 - Week 5 of 13

Planned Harvest

(May differ from actual harvest)

Red LaSoda Potatoes
Spaghetti Squash
Dry Beans
Melons
Summer Squash
Sweetie 82 Corn
Cucumbers
Tomatoes

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Chickens

Josh is finally bringing us our chickens this Friday. They will be available starting next week to those who put their names down that one time.

Spaghetti Squash



No need to eat it right away. It will keep 2 to 3 months on your counter top.

We have no room for spaghetti squash recipes in this newsletter but we have several on our website under
> Recipes > Squash, Winter

Last Week's Large Squash

These heirloom squash do not lose their flavor as they get larger. Looking for a recipe to use it? Try Philippe's refreshing *Squash & Corn Cold Chowder*

Newsletter editor

Philippe Waterinckx

A big Thank You to the folks who helped clean the grout in our new room last Saturday. Progress was made! We are really appreciative of your help. Please see Philippe to receive a little Thank You gift for your time and generosity.

Desert Farming in Action: Farm Trip is this Saturday

Farming is challenging. Organic farming is more challenging. Desert organic farming is even more challenging. Because few of us realize how challenging it actually is, we may take for granted the produce we get from Crooked Sky Farms. So, we highly recommend this trip, or a future one, to all who haven't been there yet. Visiting the farm and talking with Farmer Frank gives a better understanding of what is going at the farm, a better appreciation for his sustainable and organic farming methods, and it also helps adjust expectations one might have of the CSA. Our produce does not come from pampered growing environments such as they might benefit from in more favorable climates, such as in California. Come find out how Farmer Frank is able to grow such diverse crops using no chemicals and irrigating as little as once every 10 days in the current scorching heat.

There is no limit to the number of people who can show up at the farm on Saturday. We just ask that you let us know if you're coming, so we can plan for numbers. I forgot to mention before that visitors will be welcome to harvest produce for free during this visit.

Directions to the farm are in last week's newsletter (# 92, available online). There are so far about 30 people signed up. We hope that many opportunities for car pooling will present themselves through members meeting at the CSA, in front of the Historic Y courtyard gate between 7:45 and 8:00 am. Leaving Tucson by 8:00 am, you should be at the farm by 9:45 – 10:00 am. If you prefer to arrive later, no problem: field tours will be ongoing until 2:00 pm. As usual, it will be a very informal event.

Huitlacoche [wee-tlah-KOH-cheh] (Ustilago maydis)

Sometimes, the corn we get from Crooked Sky Farm carries huitlacoche. Mmmh. What's that? Know in the U.S. as corn smut or Mexican truffle, huitlacoche is an edible fungus that takes the place of the kernels of the cobs with large mushroom-like galls made up of much-enlarged cells of the affected plant, fungal threads, and blue-black spores. The spores give the cob a burned, scorched appearance. Considered a pest in most of the United States, the crops it affects are usually destroyed. However, in Mexico and some Native American tribes (Hopi and Zuni in particular), it is considered a delicacy, even being preserved and sold for a higher price than corn. Huitlacoche have a flavor described as mushroom-like, sweet, savory, woody, and earthy. Flavor compounds include sotolon and vanillin, as well as the sugar glucose. It is used to flavor quesadillas, tamales, soups and other specialty dishes.



You may occasionally find a huitlacoche-carrying ear of corn in your share. It may shock you or it may delight you. Luckily, it delighted two CSA members who reported finding some in their share of corn last week. I am still waiting to get so lucky and I have been with the CSA over three years... If you do get lucky, try the huitlacoche recipe in our online recipe archive, under Corn.

Huitlacoche has had difficulty entering into the American and European diets as most farmers see it as blight, despite attempts by government and high profile chefs. In the mid-1990s and due to demand created by high-end restaurants, Pennsylvania and Florida farms were allowed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to intentionally infect corn with huitlacoche. The market for it is still small.

Sweetie 82

Sweetie 82 is an amazingly sweet yellow corn. One hundred percent of its kernels are sweet, as opposed to 25% of the kernels of regular sweet corn. So, it's a treat.



However, the downside is that the Sweetie 82 ears don't always look great. The husks of its small and slender ears are less tightly wrapped around the ear than those of regular corn which can give them a dry and shredded appearance.

Because its loser husks make the ear more vulnerable to foreign invasion, Sweetie 82 is also more prone to corn borer presence. If the sight of a corn borer (which is a little caterpillar, not a worm) disturbs you, preventatively chop off the top of the ear and throw it away. Corn borer activity is at its peak right now, but will decrease as the summer progresses.

Some of the melons you may see in your shares this summer

 <p>Canary Melon</p>	 <p>Honeydew and Golden Honeydew Melon</p>
 <p>Banana Melon</p>	 <p>Prescot Fond Blanc Melon</p>
 <p>Crimson Red Watermelon</p>	 <p>Sugar Baby Watermelon (aka personal watermelon)</p>

Armenian Cucumbers

If you're new to the Tucson CSA, you may be surprised by these strange-looking cucumbers that show up in your share in the summer. They 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 appearances can be deceiving: they go limp but they do stay crispy!



Armenian cucumbers are adapted to our desert 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."

Because Crooked Sky Farms grow organically, our Armenian cucumbers don't need to be peeled or seeded, and despite their limpid 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.

Cold Squash & Corn Chowder

Philippe, Tucson CSA

A very refreshing Southwestern soup, ideal for hot summer evenings. A good recipe for putting large squash to good and delicious use.

- 2 pounds (or more) of summer squash
- kernels of 2 ears of corn
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 jalapeno (or 1/4 teaspoon Cayenne pepper)
- salt to taste
- Garnish:
 - 1 teaspoon chile powder
 - 1 tablespoon chopped oregano, basil or mint.

Cube the squash. If the squash is large, scoop out the seeds first.

In a covered skillet, sauté all ingredients in oil until the squash is tender (about 20 minutes). Then, add 4 cups cold water or vegetable stock. Blend or liquidize. Add more water or stock to achieve runny but creamy texture.

Refrigerate for 4 hours or until cold. Serve in bowls and sprinkle some chile powder on each before serving. Garnish with some fresh oregano, basil or mint.