



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 196 ~ July 6, 2009 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer '09 Week 6 of 13

Harvest list is online

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Second payments due

If you pay for your share in two installments, your second payment is now due. Typically, the amount due \$130 if you have a produce share only, and \$145 if you have a produce and cheese share.

If you're not sure how much you owe, ask at the front desk. Thanks!

Storing Tomatoes

The tomatoes are harvested when ripe, except on the few occasions when we get green tomatoes. Ripe tomatoes, especially the heirloom varieties, bruise easily – this is why you should not handle them when picking them up at the CSA. Eat your CSA tomatoes soon or they may mold or collapse.

To help keep your tomatoes looking good until you get home, we suggest that you take them away in their green baskets. You can return the baskets the following week.

Carefully wash and dry your tomatoes before storing them away from the sun and in a cool place: a counter-top or bowl usually is fine. If you plan to keep them for more than a couple days, a cellar or wine cooler (around 65°F) will help keep them in shape.

Avoid storing your tomatoes in a refrigerator, as temperatures below 55°F break down their cell structure, which makes the tomatoes watery and reduces their flavor.

Newsletter Editor

Philippe Waterinckx

CROOKED SKY FARM TOMATOES

Farmer Frank attempts to grow heirloom or open-pollinated plants as much as possible. We've had some spectacular varieties over the years. However, heirloom tomato plants can be unpredictable and sometimes they fail to meet their yield expectations. So, as a back-up crop in case the heirlooms fail to produce, Farmer Frank also grows hybrids. This year, the heirloom tomatoes have done well in the fields and so the farm is having a bumper crop of both heirloom and hybrid tomatoes. This is why we've been having two baskets of tomatoes in our shares instead of the usual single one.

The heirloom tomatoes we've been enjoying are:

San Marzano: this pear-shaped tomato is generally known as the plum tomato. These dense, flavorful and deep red tomatoes are considered to be the best sauce tomatoes in the world. The story goes that the first seed of the San Marzano tomato came to Campania, Italy, in 1770 as a gift from the Kingdom of Peru to the Kingdom of Naples, and that it was planted near Naples in the area now known as the commune of San Marzano. Often mistaken for Roma tomatoes, these are thinner and pointier in shape. The flesh is also thicker with fewer seeds, and the taste is much stronger, sweeter and less acidic. Many people describe the taste as bittersweet, like high-quality chocolate. Because of their high quality and origins near Naples, San Marzano tomatoes have been designated as the only tomatoes that can be used for Vera Pizza Napoletana (True Neapolitan Pizza).



Moskvich: This beautiful traditional tomato originates from the Kaluga region in Western Russia. It is a smooth medium-sized tomato, round with a somewhat flattened shape, and it has a very rich flavor.

Lemon Boy: Sometimes mistaken for an unripe tomato, this medium-sized to large tomato has a striking yellow skin and flesh. Its flavor is mild. Use it quickly as it doesn't keep very long and tends to collapse with little notice.



And the hybrids are:



Better Boy: This favorite of gardeners is a hybrid between the Big Boy and the Lemon Boy tomatoes. These large tomatoes can have an irregular shape. They will store a little longer than the other tomatoes we get from the farm.

Large Red Cherry: Large cherry tomato with a sweet and juicy flesh. It is a prolific grower that makes large clusters of tomatoes that are a pleasure to pop in your mouth and let explode on your palate.



Cucumber Coconut Milk Curry (from Bangladesh)

Contributed by Tony, Tucson CSA

1/2 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chile powder
1 tablespoon ghee or butter
1 onion, chopped
1 or 2 cucumbers, seeds removed, and scooped out in little balls (or cubed)
1 16-ounce can coconut milk
1 cardamom pod
1 1-inch cinnamon segment
1 bay leaf
2 cups water
salt

Heat ghee or butter in large skillet and sauté cumin seeds and onion in it until onion is slightly caramelized. Make a curry powder by mixing together the ground spices (turmeric, coriander, cumin and chile powder) and add to the onion mix. Fry the curry powder in the onion mix for 5 minutes or so. Add 1 cup of water. Reduce until mixture develops a pasty texture. Add cucumber and sauté for 5 more minutes. Add the coconut milk, 1 cup of water, the cardamom, cinnamon segment and bay leaf. Reduce further until the mixture thickens to a creamy consistency (10 to 20 minutes). Add salt to taste.

Grilled Butternut Squash

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Cooking a butternut squash in the summer can really heat up the house, so why not use the grill instead of the stove or oven? The intense heat of the grill will caramelize some of the sugars in the squash, making the flesh smoky and sweet. Serve as a side dish or sandwich topping. Cook the whole squash at once and leftovers can be used in a quick salad or pasta dish.

Several 1/4" to 1/2" thick slices of butternut squash
Pinch of ground nutmeg, ground sage, salt and pepper
Balsamic Vinegar and olive oil
Salt to taste

Rub squash slices with oil and vinegar and sprinkle with seasonings. Place slices on hot grill. Cook about 7 minutes on each side, or until nicely browned and tender. Remove from the grill and sprinkle with salt, to taste. Serve warm.



Cucumber Noodles

Sara, Tucson CSA

This is a great, refreshing side dish. If you want to make it into a simple meal, double the ingredients for the dressing and toss together with chilled soba noodles and cubed tofu or pre-cooked chicken.

1 large cucumber
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
2 teaspoons sesame oil
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon grated ginger
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds, to garnish

Peel cucumber and discard skin. Continue using peeler, making long, lengthwise cuts to make 'noodles'. Peel, rotating the cucumber until you reach the core of seeds. Discard seeds (or use to flavor a drink). Drain cucumber noodles in a colander while preparing dressing. Whisk all other ingredients together. Squeeze noodles to get rid of excess moisture. Toss with dressing and garnish with sesame seeds. Serve immediately.

Cool Summer Salad-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe calls for a small dice, about 1/4" for the ingredients. This helps the flavors meld and produces a nicer texture. If you have the time, it is really worth the extra work. If not, roughly chopped ingredients will work fine. If you have an extra large Armenian cucumber, cut it into several 2 inch tall pieces, scoop out most of the seeds and fill with the salad for a fancy, fun presentation.

1/2 medium sized melon, peeled, seeded and diced small
1 small sweet onion, finely diced
1 small or 1/2 large cucumber, diced small
2 medium tomatoes, diced small
1-2 tablespoon red wine vinegar to taste
2 teaspoons good quality olive oil
Small handful crumbles goat cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix together all ingredients, except goat cheese. Let salad sit at least 30 minutes in refrigerator. Before serving, sprinkle with cheese. Serve in cucumber cups or small bowls.

Seasoned Ice Cubes

Save your extra basil for future use! Place chopped herbs into ice cube trays, cover with water, and freeze. Be sure to cover the herbs completely with water to protect them from air and freezer damage. When frozen, pop the cubes out into labeled baggies and store in freezer for use in drinks or recipes that you can pop the whole cube, water and all, into.