



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 231 ~ March 22, 2010 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring '10 Week 4 of 13

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More recipes on our online
recipe archive

Reminder: Collect Your Whole Share!

If there is an item in your share that you don't want, don't just leave it behind: take it and either trade it (at the trading table) or donate it (to the surplus baskets).

Items you trade or donate may make other CSA members very happy, whereas if you don't pick them up nobody else at the CSA can enjoy them and they'll end up being donated to charity.

Upcoming Workshop

Local Herbalism: Harmonizing with the Elements - SPRING

Join local herbalist John Slattery in this seasonal class on holistic healing and herbalism. There will be a discussion of local plants and how they fit into our upcoming season as foods and medicines. We will sample and discuss the applications of some local herbal teas and tinctures.

To register, call John at 520.275.2105
Tuesday, March 30, 5:30-7:30 pm,
The Historic Y conference room
\$20 per person

Fennel

We may get fennel in our shares this week. If you're unfamiliar with fennel and want to learn about it, check out Newsletter 225 (Feb 8, 2010), or go to our website and look under *Recipes > Fennel > About Fennel*

Josh's Eggs

With the coming of the spring, Josh's farm eggs are plentiful again and we no longer have the one dozen per member restriction. The backyard eggs are also back in force. Yay!

SORREL



Common Sorrel or Garden Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), often simply called sorrel and also known as Spinach Dock or Narrow-leaved Dock, is a perennial green leaf vegetable native to Europe. It has been cultivated for centuries as both a garden herb and a leaf vegetable (pot herb). It is not related to Jamaican sorrel (roselle), although both have a similar flavor.

Sorrel resembles spinach in appearance but its flavor is similar to that of kiwifruit or sour wild strawberries.

As sorrel ages it grows more acidic due to its increasing oxalic acid content. Oxalic acid is a natural substance that gives a tangy taste to greens such as sorrel, rhubarb, clover leaves, and also, to a lesser extent spinach, chard and beet greens.

Young sorrel leaves may be use in salads, soups or stews. If you are planning on using it in salads, it's a good idea to stick with small tender leaves that have the fruitier and less acidic taste. Young sorrel leaves are also excellent when lightly cooked, similar to the taste of cooked chard or spinach. Older sorrel leaves can be chopped or pureed and added to soups and stews for a tangy accent.

Sorrel is hard to find in grocery stores as it doesn't fit the requirements for mass-production and large-scale distribution: it has a short shelf life and will only keep for about three days in the refrigerator.

Sorrel has high levels of vitamins A and C. It also has moderate levels of potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Because its oxalic acid content, it may, when eaten raw, interfere with calcium absorption and aggravate rheumatism and kidney or bladder stones. However, cooking breaks down and thus inactivates oxalic acid. Sorrel also has natural laxative properties.

NEW POTATOES JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Farmer Frank from Crooked Sky Farms harvests his potatoes three times a year: in April, August and December and the farm's spring crop is now ready for harvest. We are very excited to be getting them soon! We won't get them right away though: when they are pulled out of the ground, their skin is very thin and soft and bruises easily. They need to be left out to cure for one to two weeks so that their skin can harden slightly. Only after that can they be washed, sorted and distributed.



TOO MANY GREENS! REALLY?

Everyone wants to look good, feel better, and have more energy. Billions of dollars are spent each year buying supplements toward this end. Yet we often overlook simple dietary changes that can provide our bodies with the nutrients they need to achieve the goals we want. Some of the most nutrient-dense foods available on the planet are dark leafy greens--the super-heroes of the vegetable world. Popeye was right: eating a helping of delicious, dark leafy greens each day is good for you.

It is understandable that you might be struggling with all the greens you are getting in your shares, especially if you are a new member. Still, avoid letting those gems go bad in your refrigerator. Eat them instead. Or preserve them. Experiment with them. Use the CSA website resources (recipes, winter greens guide) and search engines to try methods and recipes until you find a few that work for you.

Carrot and Fennel Pasta

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a fast and easy recipe, everything is ready by the time the pasta is done cooking. The vegetables, cut into long thin strips, cook quickly. Use a vegetable peeler to cut strips of carrot, and a very sharp knife to cut long strips of fennel and onion. Butter complements the taste of fennel, but you can use olive oil if you prefer.

2-3 large carrots, sliced into thin strips (or grated)
1 large head or 2 medium heads fennel, any woody core removed, sliced into thin strips (use leafy fennel fronds for garnish if desired)
3 green onions, sliced lengthwise into thin strips
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 + tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper to taste
Cooked pasta

While pasta is cooking, stir carrots, fennel, onion and garlic into melted butter, in a skillet over medium high heat. Stir often, sprinkling mixture with a little of the boiling pasta water or white wine if it appears too dry. When pasta is cooked through, drain and add to vegetable mixture. Season with salt and pepper and another pat of butter, if desired, and toss to mix. Serve hot.



Spring Tonic Soup-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The greens in this recipe are great for helping our systems adjust to the changing season. This brothy soup is light and refreshing, but you can make it more substantial by adding a can of white beans, and sour cream or yogurt.

1 large carrot, diced small
1/4 cup white rice
3 cloves garlic or 1 bulb green garlic, minced
1 large handful sorrel, cleaned and roughly chopped
2 large handfuls endive, cleaned and roughly chopped
3 chard stems, chopped
1 1/2 quarts vegetable broth
2 hardboiled eggs, finely chopped, to garnish
Salt and pepper, to taste
Olive oil, to drizzle over individual servings

Bring vegetable broth to a simmer over medium high heat and add carrots, chard stems, garlic and rice. Cook for about 10 minutes and add endive. Cook an additional 5 minutes, then add sorrel and continue cooking for 3 more minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve. Garnish each bowl with a sprinkling of chopped eggs and a drizzle of olive oil.

Beet Raita-new

Rachel Yaseen, Two Spoons

Some lucky members sampled this recipe in Rachel's cooking demo last session. This is a great side dish, and is especially good for calming the burn of a spicy main dish.

2 cups whole milk yogurt (we prefer Straus brand)
1 cup shredded beets
1/4 each cilantro and parsley, chopped
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 tablespoon agave nectar
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 cup cooked white potatoes (optional)
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

Combine ingredients. Have fun with this one--you can really add anything that sounds good to you in a raita (cucumber, radish, carrots, spinach, etc.)

Beet and Carrot Cake

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you haven't had it before, you may think that beet cake is a joke. We did too, until we tried this. Like carrots and turnips, the beets' high sugar content lends itself wonderfully to earthy deserts.

2 cups grated carrots and beets, mixed
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
2/3 cup vegetable oil
2 large eggs
1/4 cup yogurt
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt

Streusel topping:

2/3 cup oats
2/3 cups walnuts
1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Make topping by mixing streusel ingredients together in blender, pulsing, until well mixed. Combine the granulated sugar, brown sugar, oil, eggs and yogurt in a large bowl; beat with a mixer on medium speed until well blended. Add beets and carrots; beat well. Combine flour and spices in a large bowl. Add to wet mixture and mix well. Pour batter into a greased and floured 9x13" cake pan. Sprinkle evenly with streusel mixture. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes on wire rack; remove from pan.

