



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 234 ~ April 12, 2010 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring '10 - Week 7 of 13

Harvest list is online

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More recipes on our online archive

Reminder: FARM Visit, 4/18

Want to meet your farmer and see where your food comes from? Visit Crooked Sky Farms in Phoenix this Sunday, April 18. For directions, see last week's newsletter. To car pool, meet in front of the CSA at 7:45 am. Refreshments and food will follow the tour. Free!

Ride, eat, dance & celebrate at Tucson's 1st Annual Cyclovia!



Join Tucson CSA volunteers and your fellow Tucsonans at a bicycle extravaganza this Sunday, April 18. From 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, selected streets near downtown and the University will be closed for bicycles and pedestrians. The CSA will have a booth at the intersection of 4th Street & 4th Ave. See CycloviaTucson.org for a map of the street closures and more information.

Lamb Shares are Ready

Lamb shares are here earlier than expected. You can pick up yours up any time. A balance payment of \$52 is due (assuming a prior \$20 deposit).

Newsletter Editor

Philippe Waterinckx & Kimi Eisele

NO EGGS UNTIL IT'S TIME ... IT'S TIME!

Part of becoming more intimately involved in a local food system is tuning into the natural cycles of plants and animals, and eating accordingly.

Here in Tucson, we recognize the flowering of citrus trees by the sweet smells in the evening air. We know we don't get oranges and grapefruit all year round, but in the late winter into the spring. Green chilies come in the fall. We know that sunlight and temperature affect the cycles of plant production. The same is true for eggs.

We are fortunate to have eggs from Josh's chickens and smaller backyard flocks in Tucson for sale at the CSA. But, like the seasonal availability of vegetables, eggs vary in quantity. Hens lay less in fall and winter since egg production is dependent on the amount of daylight. To compound this seasonal decrease, many hens stop laying altogether because they are molting (growing new feathers). Now that there is more daylight, hens lay more frequently. Healthy hens can lay one egg per day.

A small-scale farmer, Josh is committed to raising his hens naturally. That means he opts not to use of artificial light in the fall, which would increase egg production then. While Josh had a shortage of eggs last fall, he now has a bit of a surplus.

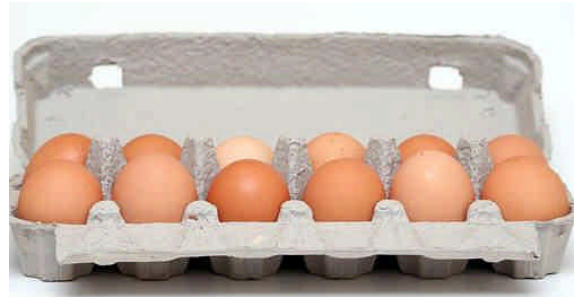
Everything in its time, right? Now is the time for eggs! Enjoy them. Even though Easter is over, consider doubling up on eggs this week. Buy some for your friends and neighbors. Introduce them to the joys of pasture-raised, farm-fresh eggs with sunset-colored yolks. Just don't get overly attached.

CACTUS FOR DINNER?

That's right...it's nopalito season! Nopalitos are the fresh pads from the *Opuntia ficus-indica*, or cultivated prickly pear cactus, which can be de-spined and eaten. Their flavor is not unlike a combination of green beans and asparagus. Studies show that this low-carb food can help moderate blood glucose levels, which makes it a recommended food for diabetics.

To prepare nopalitos: we're lucky that our nopalitos get de-spined at the farm. That's most of the work already done! The cooking part is easy. Just boil or steam the whole pads for 5 to 8 minutes. Overcooking can make them gummy, so experiment with timing. Perhaps the best way to prepare them is to throw them right on the grill until they are soft and browned (or slightly charred on the outside)! Once done, cut them into diamond shapes or strips. Try the recipes on the back page or on our online recipe archive.

Yum!



Dandelion Greens Fettuccine

The Cook's Garden catalog – Spring/Summer 1989

2 cups dandelion greens
2 eggs
1 1/2 cup flour
1/2 teaspoon salt

Put dandelion greens and eggs in a blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to a bowl, add salt and start adding flour while beating with a spoon. Keep adding until dough is stiff. Turn out onto floured surface and knead until smooth (approximately 5 minutes). Roll out with rolling pin to 1/8-1/4" thickness or thinner. Allow to stand and dry for 1 hour then cut into strips. Drop into boiling water and cook 1-2 minutes. Serve with butter and grated Parmesan or Asiago cheese.

Grilled Nopal-and-Green-Onion Tacos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Grilled nopales tend to be less 'gummy' than those that are boiled or steamed. If you are squeamish about the 'gummy' factor, then this is the way to go. Plus, the slight burn on the green onions and cactus makes the dish more delicious and complex in flavor.

1 bunch green onions
2-4 cactus pads
1 tablespoon oil
1 tablespoon balsamic or red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon ground oregano
1 teaspoon chile flakes
Salt and pepper to taste
6 corn tortillas
Goat cheese or other mild white cheese

Mix together oil, vinegar, chile, oregano and salt and pepper. Rub mixture over onions and cactus and let marinate while the grill heats. When the grill is hot, place pads and green onions over an area with medium high heat. After three minutes, remove onions and flip cactus pads. Cook pads until beginning to brown and slightly charred around the edges. Remove from grill and slice into long strips. Serve wrapped in tortilla with green onions and cheese.

Stuffed Artichoke (this works best with larger artichokes)

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1 artichoke, 1 small onion and 2 garlic cloves
Oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, herbs

With a sharp knife, remove the top third of the artichoke as well as the stem. With scissors, cut the remaining sharp tips of the leaves. Using your thumbs, separate the leaves as much as you can. Don't hesitate to apply force – artichokes are tough babes!

Peel an onion, cut it in half, and slice it into 1/3" thick strips. Peel two cloves of garlic and cut them into 4 to 6 slices each. Insert the garlic slices and ends of the onion strips among the leaves. Pack in as many as you can!

Place artichoke in a small saucepan. Fill the pan with water halfway up the height of the artichoke. Pour 1/4 cup oil and 1/4 cup vinegar over the top of the artichoke. Sprinkle the artichoke with salt, pepper, and thyme, Italian herbs, or Herbes de Provence (or any seasoning of your choice).

Cover, bring to a boil, and simmer for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Serve hot, warm or cold, by itself or with a garlic-butter dip.

Grilled Fava Beans

Adapted from TheFoodSection.com

This recipe is a good way to by-pass the labor-intensive shelling and skinning of fava beans.

Season the raw beans generously with salt and toss with olive oil. Place the pods on the grill and cook until blackened and soft. As the pods pop and blister on the outside, they steam within.

When they have sufficiently charred on both sides, remove the pods from the grill, let cool, and then pry them open to reveal the beans, which may be slipped from their thin skins or eaten whole, skin and all. The salty, meaty beans are as tasty as they are easy to prepare.

Citrus Stewed Baby Artichokes (NEW!)

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is perfect for smaller artichokes, medium ones work fine, but you may only be able to use the tender heart of really big artichokes. A blend of different citrus works best, a bit of sour and sweet. To bulk up the recipe add chard stems, fava beans, peas or potatoes.

3-4 baby artichokes
Generous tablespoon olive oil
Juice of one sweet citrus fruit, plus several slices of a combination of sweet and sour citrus
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
About one cup cooked white beans
1/2 cup spring veggies
Salt and pepper to taste

Fill a medium bowl with water and lemon juice. To prepare artichokes peel away outer layer of leaves and cut about 1/4 of the top. To make sure that you are discarding all the fibrous pieces from the artichokes test one of the remaining leaves by snapping it in half. If it does not snap in half, continue removing leaves until you reach more tender leaves. Peel, but do not remove stem. Quarter artichokes and dunk in lemon water to prevent browning. (Drain artichokes before using!)

In a medium saucepan, with a tight fitting lid, toss together all ingredients. Bring to a simmer, cover, and reduce heat to low. Artichokes should be ready after 15-25 minutes, depending on size. Taste for salt and serve hot or at room temperature. Garnish with extra slices of citrus, if desired.

Three Bean Salad with Nopalitos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This salad is a take on the traditional canned, three-bean salad. The different colors and sizes add interest, but you can use just one type of bean for convenience.

2 nopal pads, grilled or broiled and cut into bite size pieces
1 cup each cooked white beans, kidney beans, black beans
1/2 bunch green onion, chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and stir well to mix. Let salad sit for at least one hour before serving.