



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 294 ~ June 20, 2011 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2011

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

Extra! Extra! Romas! Romas!

Farmer Frank has extra harvests of Roma tomatoes (best for canning) this season. You can purchase them in bulk at the front desk— \$20 per flat (approx. 13 lbs.). There may also be some non-Roma heirloom varieties available.

What will you do with so many tomatoes? Make an enormous tomato salad! Can them! Make sauce and freeze it!

The National Center for Home Food Preservation (www.uga.edu/nchfp) has all the info you could ever want about canning, freezing, drying, fermenting, pickling and jelly-ing produce.



Straw, Man!

In connection with Earth Walk 2011 (which starts June 21st at Hi Corbett Field), over 1000 bales of straw will be offered for sale at \$6.50 each (1-9 bales) and \$5 each (10 or more) (pick up June 22nd). Many home gardeners use straw as a mulch or ground cover to control weeds and retain moisture. Call Jack at 229-6147 for more info.

YOU SAY TOMATO, I SAY . . . ONLY IF IT'S AN HEIRLOOM

The tomato came to us from South America brought via the Spanish. Actually a fruit, most people tend to eat it as a vegetable, either raw or cooked, in salads, sauces, side dishes, soups, and drinks.

Heirloom tomatoes are non-hybrid or open pollinated cultivars. This means that the plants are pollinated naturally by insects, birds, or wind as opposed to controlled pollination, in which plants are bred with known “parents” resulting in certain desirable traits.

There are several categories of heirlooms. Commercial heirlooms are those varieties introduced before 1940. Family heirlooms refer to those that come from seeds passed down over several generations of a family. Many home gardeners and small farms were responsible for keeping heirlooms alive over the decades.

Over the past 50 years we have lost many heirloom varieties as industrial farming has favored hybrids bred for certain characteristics—such as uniformity of size, color, and shape. Heirloom varieties are genetically unique, and thus more resistant to pests and diseases and specifically adapted to grow in certain conditions. The loss of them has made our food more vulnerable to pests and other epidemics.

Fortunately, there is an active movement to keep heirloom varieties alive and thriving in a world of conventional (and often flavorless) hybrid tomatoes.

Now that it's the season, we'll get a delicious assortment of heirloom tomatoes in our CSA share in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and flavors. Here are some of the varieties we might see:

Big Rainbow: Large, yellow with red swirls. Mild, sweet flavor.

Black Krim: Dark red to brown. From the “Island of Krim” in the Black Sea, aka the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine.

Brandywine: Large and bulbous, many colors!

Cherokee Purple: Deep rose. Named in 1990 by Craig LeHoullier, who received seeds of an unnamed cultivar in the mail from J. D. Green of Tennessee, who claimed that the Cherokee gave the “purple” tomato to his neighbor “100 years ago.”

Green Zebra: Green with light green stripes. Not officially an heirloom, but an open-pollinated cultivar bred from four heirloom varieties by Tom Wagner of Lancaster, Kansas in 1983.

Jubilee: Golden. Released by Burpee Seed Co. in 1943.

Lillian's Yellow Heirloom: Bright yellow, few seeds. Collected by Lillian Bruce of Tennessee who passed the seed to Robert Richardson and eventually to the Seed Savers Exchange yearbook.

(From “Heirloom Tomatoes” in *Wikipedia.com*.) For specific information about the CSA heirloom varieties, Farmer Frank recommends you visit Tomato Bob's web site at <http://www.tomatobob.com/>

Are potatoes starting to pile up in your kitchen? Cook a huge batch of potatoes all at once for easy recipes throughout the week. Make a big batch of your favorite potato salad and keep the rest for quick meals. Working with pre-cooked potatoes helps minimize heat in the kitchen and gets food on the table fast. Cooked potatoes should last in the fridge for about 4-5 days.

Potato Tacos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

These are really nice garnished with shredded cabbage or lettuce, slices of cucumber and onion. Use roasted chiles if you have them, if not add some red chile flakes for flavor. Handling the tortillas is a delicate operation, be patient and don't be frustrated if your first couple end up a bit ugly – they'll still taste fine.

About 1 ½ cups cooked potatoes, lightly mashed
½ teaspoon ground cumin
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
2-4 roasted chiles, peeled, seeded and diced, or red chile flakes
About 8 corn tortillas
2-4 tablespoons vegetable oil
Salsa and garnish for tacos

Mix together potatoes, chiles, cumin, garlic and salt and pepper. In a heavy skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Place one tortilla into oil and flip after one or two seconds (this makes the tortilla pliable enough to fold in half without breaking). Place 1 heaping tablespoon of potato mixture on the half of the tortilla closest to you. Gently fold the other half over the filling, towards you. Press the tortilla closed for a few seconds to seal, then move the taco to one side to make room for more tacos. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Add more oil as needed to keep skillet covered in a thin layer. Flip tacos when beginning to brown on bottom side. When cooked on both sides, place on an old newspaper to drain.

Potato Pancakes

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is a good way to use up any leftover potatoes. The best texture for the potatoes is just lightly mashed, but you can use creamy mashed potato leftovers as well. For a tasty surprise, you can stuff the potato patties with cheese before you cook them. Serve with sliced tomatoes and fried eggs for a quick breakfast or dinner.

2 cups cooked potatoes, lightly mashed
Corn from one ear of cooked corn
About 2 tablespoons oil
Flour, breadcrumbs or panko to prevent sticking (mix in whatever herbs or spices you like)
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix corn with potatoes, seasoning with salt and pepper to taste. Form potato mixture into small patties and coat with flour or bread crumbs. Heat skillet to medium and add the oil. Cook patties over medium high heat until browned on both sides, about 3 to 4 minutes per side.

Bulgur and Chickpeas with Greek Vegetable Trio

Paula Redinger, Tucson CSA

Whole grains, legumes, and a large proportion of veggies make a healthy tasty meal!

For each serving:

1 cup cooked bulgur wheat
½ cup cooked chickpeas
1-2 cups "Greek Vegetable Trio" (mix of roughly chopped tomato, cucumber, onion)
Fresh herb of your choice (parsley, mint, cilantro, oregano...)
Feta cheese (optional)

Briefly warm the bulgur and chickpeas in the microwave, or serve at room temperature. Combine all the ingredients with the dressing below, or combine bulgur, chickpeas and dressing, then top with veggies, feta and herbs.

Dressing – mix together the following according to your taste:

Olive oil
Lemon juice – or vinegar if no lemons are handy
Tahini – just a touch, or omit if you do not have any on hand
Garlic – minced then mashed
Salt
Pepper
Chile flakes

Stewed Summer Squash-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Vegetables stewed in a tomato sauce are delicious served room temperature in the summer. Drizzle with extra olive oil and serve with bread and cheese for a simple meal.

1 large squash (or 2 medium-size), cut into a large dice
About ½ cup diced onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup diced tomato
2 to 4 tablespoons olive oil
Salt, to taste

Toss all ingredients together in a medium saucepan with a tight fitting lid. Sprinkle with a couple tablespoons of water, cover and cook at a very low heat for 30-45 minutes (you can also cook in a crock pot on low heat for a couple of hours). Check occasionally to make sure ingredients are not burning on the bottom of the pan, and add water if necessary. Season to taste with salt and serve warm or cool.