



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 332 ~ April 2, 2012 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring 2012

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Chiogga Beet Cakes - new
Beet and Walnut Pasta - variation
Grapefruit Seltzer
Kickin' Collard Greens
Heirloom Bean Hummus

Many more recipes in
our online recipe archive

Lamb shares are ready for pickup

If you haven't picked up your lamb share, try to do it soon, if possible, to help us make room for the pork shares which are arriving sometime next week.

Reminder: Park Your Car Carefully Around The Historic Y

Parkwise has been aggressively patrolling our neighborhood lately. Please be aware of where and when you park, especially on blocks with resident parking restrictions. **Read the signs carefully, don't block sidewalks, and leave some space from corners and driveways.**

Stewing Chickens from Josh

For the first time, we've got stewing chickens from Josh. These are two- to three-year-old laying chickens. They're less expensive -- \$3.50 per pound instead of the \$4.50 per pound price for the fryers. Make soup with them, or check the web for other stewing chicken recipes.

We have just a handful of small fryers left, until Josh will have more in May. We may possibly get some more stewing chickens.

WHY PLANT STARTS?



Some of the crops Farmer Frank plants come from seeds planted straight in the fields. Seeds from other crops, such as tomatoes, chiles, artichokes, etc. are first planted in little pots and started in greenhouses to shelter them from the cold weather. When the time comes to put them in the ground, farmer Frank often has a surplus of them and, if we're lucky, we get some in our shares.

We get plant starts every year in late winter and early spring. It's an integral part of being a CSA member: we share everything the farm grows, and that includes surplus plant starts.

Over the years, we've had all kinds of basil, tomatoes, tomatillos, chilies, strawberries, rhubarb, artichokes, fennel, etc. I always enjoy growing a few plant starts from Crooked Sky Farms. First, there is sometimes a surprise element: it's not always apparent what variety the seedlings are. I look forward to seeing what particular variety a mystery tomato plant or chili seedling might turn out to be. In the past, I've had Cherokee tomato plant and some really weird eggplant. This year, I've planted an artichoke so far and I'm excited to soon be planting something else from this week's share.

Then there is always the thrill and the challenge of growing something oneself. Yes, it can be tricky to find the right environment for it, whether in a pot indoors or in the garden. I've had good luck and bad luck. The plants don't always thrive, let alone survive. But when they do, it is incredibly rewarding to eat something you've grown yourself. And when they don't, I still enjoy planting them and watching them develop for a while (or not) and just knowing they're there and caring for them.

IT'S TRANSITION TIME IN THE FIELDS

You will have noticed that we have been getting fewer greens lately. It's a sign that the cold weather is over. I love greens, but I didn't know I loved them for many years. I never ate any greens other than spinach and lettuce growing up. When I started the CSA eight years ago, I was overwhelmed by greens at first, and couldn't believe so many kinds existed. I soon learned to incorporate them in nearly everything I cooked. Now I find it hard to live without them for five months of the year.

As the greens are slowly phasing out, the farm enters a tricky period because the warm weather crops can be a bit slow coming up. Depending on the weather, this period can last 4 to 6 weeks. It's typically a time when we get more potatoes, root vegetables and dry beans, as these can be stored at the farm and used to fill our shares when fresh veggies are less plentiful. Beets can be kept in the ground long after their greens have wilted (like most root vegetables which go dormant during the inclement season). Potatoes harvested in late December and stored in a cool dry place at the farm will be called upon to make more frequent appearances. The same goes for dried beans, which were harvested last fall (we'll get mostly pinto, mayocoba and black turtle beans).



Chiogga Beet Cakes - new

Howard Frederick, Tucson CSA

3-4 large beets, peeled and grated
3 Red La Soda potatoes grated (peeling not necessary)
1 medium onion, grated
2 eggs
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons whole wheat flour
Salt and pepper to taste

Place grated beets, potatoes and onion in a large bowl and mix in the eggs, oil, flour and salt. Place spoonfuls of the mix on a hot, oiled griddle and press them into pancakes. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes, turn and repeat cooking time.

NOTE: these can be made in a hot (400° F) oven; put the mix on a well-oiled baking sheet and press down to make the pancakes. Place sheet in the oven and let cook for 5 minutes; remove, turn the pancakes and return to oven for another 5 minutes.

Beet and Walnut Pasta - variation

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Simple ingredients make a satisfying dish in this easy recipe. Pre-roast the beets earlier in the week, when you have the oven on, then the dish will take only as long as the pasta boiling. Add the beet greens if you like, or save them for another dish. Try using cooked wheat berries in place of the pasta.

1 bunch beets, roasted, peeled and diced
1 handful parsley, finely chopped
1 handful walnuts, roughly chopped
½ bunch green onion, thinly sliced
1 pound pasta, cooked
1-2 tablespoons olive oil
1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Salt to taste

While pasta is cooking, prepare other ingredients. Drain al dente pasta and quickly toss with remaining ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot or cold.

Grapefruit Seltzer

This is an incredibly refreshing drink for hot days and it can be made with any citrus. Much healthier than store-bought lemonade! Whenever you have more citrus than you can handle at any one time, squeeze it and freeze the juice in ice cube trays for a seltzer treat on another hot day. Add a bit of crushed mint or basil for an extra twist.

1 part grapefruit juice (or any citrus juice)
1 part sparkling water
Agave nectar (or simple syrup), to taste

Stir together juice and agave nectar, about 2 teaspoons per cup of juice. Add sparkling water and taste for sweetness, adding more nectar if desired. Serve over ice.

Kickin' Collard Greens

1 tablespoon olive oil
3 slices bacon
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
3 cups chicken broth
1 pinch red pepper flakes
1 pound fresh collard greens, cut into 2-inch pieces

Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add bacon, and cook until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, crumble and return to the pan. Add onion, and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, and cook until just fragrant. Add collard greens, and fry until they start to wilt. Pour in chicken broth, and season with salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes, or until greens are tender.

Heirloom Bean Hummus

Lori Adkison, Tucson CSA

This is Tucson twist to a party favorite.

1 cup heirloom beans
1 tablespoon dried chipotle flakes
1/2 onion, roughly chopped
1/3 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
8 cloves roasted garlic
1/2 cup tahini
1 canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce
sea salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
water, if needed for thinning the consistency

Soak the beans overnight. Drain and rinse the beans and cook them covered in water with dried chipotle flakes and onion until done, approximately two hours on the stovetop (or all day on low in the crock pot). Prepare the garlic for roasting by cutting off the top portion of the bulb and drizzling with olive oil. Wrap the garlic in foil and bake in a 400° degree oven for 30 minutes. Drain the beans and let cool. In a food processor, combine lime juice, garlic and tahini. After achieving a smooth consistency, add the beans and water if necessary. Add the cilantro, chipotle and salt to taste. Serve in a bowl garnished with cilantro leaves and drizzled with olive oil.