



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 340 ~ May 28, 2012 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring 2012

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Summer Squash and Spicy Citrus Pesto Salad
Summertime Potato Salad
Briam
Italian Eggplant with Capers

Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

Dog Bones, Anyone?

As usual, when the beef shares arrive, we get dog bones with them. The beef shares arrived last week, so we've now got dog bones. Or maybe we should just call them "bones", because many members use them to make beef stock. With our latest beef order, we got quite a few more beef shares than the number of deposits we received, so there are shares available for members who did not pay a deposit.

Green Tomatoes?

This time of year, we often get green tomatoes because if the farm waited for them to ripen on the vine, there would be too many tomatoes at once. Let them ripen on the counter, or use them in a green tomato recipe.

Why Do We Spell Things the Way We Do?

Why is the plural of "tomato" spelled "tomatoes", but the plural of "tomatillo" spelled "tomatillos"? (This question would surely stump former Vice President Dan Quayle, who famously told a student in a spelling bee that "potato" is spelled "potatoe".) According to one source, there is no rule telling us when to use -s or -es. But according to another, "The more foreign-sounding the word, the less likely it is to be spelled with '-oes' in the plural." Wow! Only in the English language!

TOMATILLOS, OR, 'WHAT ARE THOSE FUNNY LITTLE GREEN THINGS ANYWAY?'



Tomatillos are a delicious vegetable similar in shape and size to a tomato, but more closely related to the gooseberry. They have a tangy taste and are classics in Mexican food, but are excellent in a wide range of dishes. To use your tomatillos, you will first need to remove their papery husks. They also have a sticky residue on their skin that is easily removed by dunking them in water. Tomatillos are often used in sauces.

Grilling or skillet roasting whole tomatillos gives a smoky depth to their flavor. Just cook them over medium high heat, turning occasionally, until they are mostly brown (some black charred spots are fine). Grilled tomatillos and green onions make a delicious sauce, blended together with a little salt, pepper, lime juice and cilantro!

The Storage Controversy – There seems to be some disagreement among web sources about how best to store tomatillos. According to Wikipedia, they'll keep in the refrigerator for about two weeks, but they'll last even longer if the husks are removed and they're stored in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. However, another website says "They should never be stored in air-tight containers." (Maybe they're assuming the husks are left on?) (<http://whatscookingamerica.net/tomatillos.htm>) A third website (<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/tomatillo.html>) says "Fresh tomatillos with the husk still intact may be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. They are best stored in a paper bag. Tomatillos last a week longer in the refrigerator if the husks are removed and the fruit is placed in sealed plastic bags. Tomatillos may also be frozen after removing the husks." (Hmmm, I think we still have some in the bottom of the freezer from last year! Oops.) So that's two votes for plastic bags in the fridge with the husks removed. I think that third website just sort of sounds like they know what they're talking about, don't you agree? So I'm putting my money, and my tomatillos, there. Besides, it's a government website (Centers for Disease Control) so you *know* you can trust it!

As usual, there are tomatillo recipes on the CSA website. Just click on "Recipes" in the green bar across the top of our homepage.

EGGPLANT

Eggplant is a member of the nightshade (Solanaceae) family, so it is akin to the potato and tomato, as well as the tomatillo and chayote. Although we use the eggplant as a vegetable, it is really a fruit.

There are many variations of eggplant in various colors, shapes and sizes. The English actually gave the fruit the name of "eggplant" referring to the shape of one variety. Most Europeans refer to it as an "aubergine", but Italians call it melanzana.

Eggplant is a spongy, mild-tasting vegetable that's meaty yet low in calories. It's never eaten raw, but it can be baked, grilled, or sautéed. Smaller eggplants also tend to be less bitter. Freshness is important, so don't store them for very long. So, eat the eggplant first, then turn to the tomatillos (which you stored in the fridge in a plastic bag with their husks removed, right? (see above)).

Now reread the final paragraph of the above story about tomatillos, but replace the word "tomatillo" with the word "eggplant".

Summer Squash and Spicy Citrus Pesto Salad

Kumi Rao, Ruchikala

1 share summer squash (4-5 small squash)
2 loose cups of basil
1 jalapeno lightly chopped
1/3-1/2 cup of chopped walnuts or whole pine nuts
3 cloves of garlic (roughly chopped)
Sea salt and black pepper to taste
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
Zest of one lemon, juice from half the lemon

Blend basil, jalapeno, garlic, 1/4 cup nuts, 1 teaspoon of salt and 1/3 cup of olive oil in a food processor or blender until it becomes a fine paste. Thinly slice the summer squash into ribbons. Toss summer squash with about 1/2 cup of the pesto or to taste. Add lemon zest and juice to the salad. Add remaining nuts and toss. Check seasonings to taste. If this makes more pesto than you can use for the squash, it will easily keep for at least a week in the fridge. Use it on pasta, rice, or other dishes.

Summertime Potato Salad

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Use a couple teaspoons of mole powder or other Mexican spice mix for this recipe. It is equally good served hot or cold. Roll it up in a tortilla with refried beans for an easy dinner, or serve cold over lettuce.

1/2 basket tomatoes, chopped
1/2 basket tomatillos, peeled and chopped
About 3-4 medium potatoes, chopped
1 small onion, sliced thin
1 pepper, chopped
1 tablespoon chili powder or mole mix
1 tablespoon oil
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

Boil potatoes until just tender. Drain. Heat one tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add onions and chili powder, and stir to coat. Cook until fragrant. Add pepper, tomatoes, tomatillos, and onion. Cover and lower heat to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Drizzle with lemon juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Briam

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

1 small or three baby or Japanese eggplants, chopped into one inch cubes
1 bell pepper, green or red, cored, seeded, cut into one-inch pieces (substitute roasted chile from the freezer)

1 pound potatoes, cut into one-inch cubes, peeled if needed (not generally needed for our CSA potatoes)
1 pound zucchini or other summer squash, cut into one-inch cubes
1 large red or yellow onion, cut into one-inch cubes
1 pound tomatoes, chopped, or one 15 ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano, or 1 and 1/2 teaspoons dried
2 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix all the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Put into a large non-reactive (i.e., not metal) baking dish. Bake, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 1 1/2 hours until vegetables are very tender and a sauce forms in the pan. This is even better the next day.

Italian Eggplant with Capers

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is an excellent sauce for pasta, but it would also be nice served over rice. If you want to use it as a topping for bread, chop the eggplant into a smaller cubes.

2 skinny or 1 large round eggplant, peeled (if desired) and diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large ripe tomato, diced, or about 1/4 cup canned, diced tomato
2 tablespoons capers
Small handful feta cheese, crumbled (optional)
1 tablespoon cream (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste
About 1 tablespoon olive oil

Heat oil in a medium skillet and add eggplant and garlic, stirring well to coat. Drizzle eggplant with a few tablespoons of water and cover. Cook eggplant over medium high heat for about 7 minutes, checking occasionally and adding water to prevent any burning or sticking. When eggplant is tender, add the rest of the ingredients, except the cheese, and cook for a few more minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Stir in cheese just before serving. If using as a pasta sauce, reserve about 1/4 cup of pasta water and toss cooked pasta and reserved water into pan with mixture and cook for an additional minute.