



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2012

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

Congratulations Hannah!

Hannah, a Tuesday CSA bread volunteer, gave birth on October 5th to a baby daughter, Miriam. Miriam weighed in at an impressive 9.3 lbs.

Lamb Deposits

We filled up quickly on the deposits for lamb shares, and turned a few people away last week. So we called Josh and arranged to get a few more. Come to the front desk this week if you want a lamb share but are not yet on the list.

Beef Shares

Most members who ordered a beef share picked it up last week, but a few remain. If you put down a deposit for a beef share but haven't picked it up yet, please stop by the front desk to choose your beef share, pay the balance and take your share home. Sorry, but the dog bones are all gone.



VERDOLAGAS (PURSLANE)

“One person’s weed is another person’s feast.”

Verdolagas are a vegetable green used in many Latin American countries. It is also popular as a salad green in France and other European countries. It is similar in flavor to watercress. Most of us know it as the herbaceous weed commonly named purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*). There are cultivated varieties that grow in a more upright fashion than the weed. In Mexico it is often used as a thickener in stews.

Both the succulent leaves and the stems of verdolagas are edible. You may want to discard the lower half of the stem, though, depending on its size and how you plan to use it in your cooking. For salads, use only the most tender top few inches, chopping into bite-size pieces.

Gently remove the leaves from the base of the stem to use as well. For cooking, use any stem that is not fibrous, chopping stem and leaves together into bite size pieces. Like other greens, verdolagas need to be well cleaned by dunking in water and swishing around to remove any grit.

AQUAS FRESCAS

As I sit here at the computer working on the newsletter, I’m listening to a song by Los Socios del Ritmo (a prominent Mexican cumbia group) called “Oasis de Agua Fresca”. How appropriate! There’s no reason to limit your consumption of various aguas frescas (literally translated, “fresh waters”) to the occasional Latin American vacation or meals at Mexican restaurants here in town – we have an essential ingredient right here at the Tucson CSA this week for one of the most popular and delicious agua frescas, agua fresca de sandia (watermelon). (See the recipe on the back page.)

Aguas frescas are made with many ingredients, but mostly liquefied fruits. They’re popular in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and parts of the U.S. The popular jamaica (made from hibiscus flowers) and horchata (made from rice) are also considered aguas frescas. An agua fresca can be made from cantaloupe, guava, mango, papaya, passion fruit, tuna (prickly pear fruit), cucumber, various other fruits, and last but by no means least, watermelon.

It’s true, we’ve been receiving watermelons off and on for a few weeks now. Tired of eating your watermelon like an American? This week, try drinking it like a Mexican!

JOSH’S HENS – DO THOSE GIRLS HAVE A CALENDAR?

Just like clockwork, when the days shorten a bit, Josh’s hens decide to give us fewer eggs. And it’s happening again. This will not be news to members who have been with the CSA for several years, and it’s natural, since hens lay less as days become shorter. If people also ate fewer eggs in fall and winter than they did in spring and summer, this would not be a problem. Alas, egg demand seems to increase just when supply decreases. “Why doesn’t Josh raise more hens?” we sometimes hear. The answer is simple: Josh doesn’t want to produce more eggs than he can sell during the summer.

There’s no need yet to limit members to a dozen of Josh’s eggs at a time, but we may once again see such a limit later this year. Sorry! And if you have your own chickens, remember that you can sell your eggs through the CSA. See the front desk.

Verdolagas Salad

Verdolagas are good cooked, but also excellent raw in salads. The salad below is a basic recipe with lots of room for variation. Add bulgur wheat, cooked pasta or potatoes for a heartier dish. Variation: add 1/4 cup or so of plain yogurt to the salad for a creamy dish.

1 bunch verdolagas
Tomatoes, approximately 1 cup chopped
Cucumber, approximately 1 cup chopped
1 onion, chopped
Juice of a lemon, or 1-2 tablespoons vinegar
3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
Salt to taste

Rinse the verdolagas well in several changes of water. Remove woody stems if any. Chop or tear the verdolagas in bite-size pieces. Toss all the ingredients together in a salad bowl and serve.

Purslane (Verdolagas) Omelet

Chopped purslane is great with eggs in this simple recipe.

2 cups purslane, cut in 1-inch pieces
1 onion, chopped
1/2 teaspoon Mexican oregano or thyme
6 eggs, beaten
Olive oil or butter
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in large skillet. Add onions, purslane and herbs. Sauté for 5 minutes. Add beaten eggs and make an omelet. Season to taste.

Coconut Curried Squash Soup

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Indian curry seasonings go very well with winter squash. Use any curry mix you like for this recipe, or for a sweeter flavor use a garam masala, which uses spices like cinnamon and clove. I usually use a pre-mixed curry powder and then adjust it to my taste, adding more of the spices I like best. I use pink lentils here because the color goes best with the squash, but use what you have.

1 medium-size butternut squash (or other winter squash), peeled and chopped into large chunks
1 red or green bell pepper, chopped
1 large handful purslane, chopped finely
1/2 large onion, chopped
1/2 cup dry pink lentils
2 tablespoons oil
Garlic to taste
About 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
Curry spices; adjusted to your taste
1 can coconut milk
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large stock pot, heat oil and sauté onion, pepper, garlic and ginger for about 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in chunks of squash with curry spices and lentils then cook for a few more minutes. Add about 1 1/2 quarts of water, bring to a boil and add greens. Cook over a medium low heat until lentils and squash are soft, about 35 minutes. Add coconut milk and salt and pepper and cook for 5 more minutes. At this point you can either puree the soup and make it creamy and smooth, or leave it chunky. Serve warm.

Braised Dijon Cucumbers

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Tired of cucumber salads? Did you ever think about cooking them? Here is a take on a traditional French recipe for braised cucumbers.

1 cucumber, peeled and seeded
1 small sweet onion, minced
2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 small pat butter
1 drizzle olive oil
1 teaspoon dried tarragon or dill (optional)
Salt and pepper, to taste

Cut the cucumber in half lengthwise, scoop out seed cavity, then cut each half into three long strips. Cut strips into 1-inch pieces. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium high heat; add cucumbers and onion. Cook, tossing or stirring frequently, about 4 minutes, until cucumbers are slightly browned. Stir together mustard and vinegar and pour over cucumbers. Add butter and herbs, if using. Toss well to coat, turn heat to low and cover. Cook about 10 more minutes. The juice from the cucumbers should help them steam, but if needed, add a bit of water to prevent burning or sticking. When tender, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

Agua Fresca de Sandia (Watermelon Drink)

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1/4 large watermelon or 1/2 small watermelon
1/4 cup mint leaves (optional)
2 cups water
Juice from 2 limes (or lemons)
1 cup simple syrup (2 tablespoons sugar dissolved in 1 cup of water) or use 1/4 cup frozen lime juice (such as Minute Maid) dissolved in 1 cup of water.

Remove rind and cut watermelon flesh into cubes. Place watermelon cubes and mint in a blender with 2 cups of water and blend until the seeds have broken down. Slowly pour the obtained juice into a pitcher, through a strainer. Add lime juice, simple syrup, and stir. Chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour before serving in glasses with some ice cubes. The pulp will separate and sink to the bottom; that's ok, most people prefer to drink the clear liquid only. Best consumed within 1 or 2 days.