



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Spring 2015

Harvest list is online

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Adieu, Artichoke



The giant periwinkle blue flower you hauled home last week was a lovely but sad flag honoring the end of artichoke season. As we get acquainted with triple-digit temperatures again, it's time to bid adieu to some cool-weather favorites while anticipating the summer's bounty. But you can hang on to that spring feeling by drying your artichoke blossom for a special dried arrangement or as the star of a front door wreath.

- 1) Cut the stem to your preferred length and remove any leftover leaves.
- 2) Tie the end of the stem with some twine - wrap it around a few times and secure with a tight knot.
- 3) Hang the flower upside down in a warm, ventilated area out of direct sunlight.

Your blossom should dry after about 2 weeks and will be enjoyed for years to come.

THE MANY FACES OF FENNEL

Fennel is one of those vegetables with many more uses than you might guess at first. The bulb is the most popular part, but read on for ideas to make use of the whole plant.

Bulbs - This is the most celebrated part of the fennel plant and the most versatile. It's also what you're probably most used to cooking. You can slice or shave it raw to add a delicious licorice bite to salads, or slice and add to a paper packet of fish to infuse it with flavor. Like most edible bulbs, you can just slather in olive oil, salt and pepper and roast until tender then sprinkle some grated parmigiano or pecorino on top! Remember that since this week's fennel is still on the young side, you don't need to core or peel the bulbs before use.



Stalks - Most folks are a little bemused by the stalks - the most famous use is when Prometheus used some to steal fire from the gods (and any mythology buff knows how badly that turned out for him). But there are plenty of other ways to use this stalwart stem:

- Stalk Stock - Keep a freezer bag of chopped stalks handy and add a little to vegetable, chicken or fish stocks for a sublime hint of anise.
- Mirepoix - Chop the stalks to about the same size as your onion and throw them into the pan with a tablespoon of your fat of choice (butter pairs especially well with fennel.)

Fronds - "Fennel fronds" is not only a fun phrase to say (try it) but these frilly tops also have their role to play - as garnishes, added to salads and soups, or try these ideas:

- Pesto - Yep, pretty much any leafy green will work when emulsified with olive oil, toasted nuts and good, hard, salty cheese. The CSA website and previous newsletters have a plethora of pesto recipes you can use as a template, including Sara Jones' *Celery and Arugula Pesto* recipe from last week.
- Tea - This is an ancient recipe to soothe your digestive system after a meal. Gather a small bundle of fronds, bruise them with a mortar and pestle or chop them to release the oils from the leaves, then do the same with a handful of mint leaves to boost flavor and benefits to your digestive system. Add the leaves to a small pot with about 4 cups of water and bring to a low simmer for a few minutes (and no more - high temperatures could kill those healthy oils). Strain and enjoy!

WELCOME, TOMATILLOS!

Tomatillos - those 'green tomatoes' that come wrapped in their own papery husk and are actually more closely related to the cape gooseberry - are a true native of Mexico.

Announcing the start of summer, these tart fruits are the base of traditional Mexican green sauces or saliva-inducing salsas (see tucsoncsa.org/category/recipes/tomatillo/). Or check out some lovely recipes on the back page, including *Tomatillo Avocado Sauce*.

Beet (or Carrot) Hummus

You can use beets or carrots in hummus, or a combination of the two. Add more spices, if you like, or leave them out entirely.

1/2 pound beets, cooked, peeled, and roughly chopped
2 tablespoon tahini
5 tablespoons lemon juice
1-3 small cloves garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
1/2 teaspoon paprika or cayenne (for garnish)
Generous pinch of sea salt or Kosher salt
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a food processor (or blender) and pulse until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings and ingredients as desired. Sprinkle with paprika or chile powder before serving. Chill and store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days or freeze for longer storage.

Cold Borscht

Liz Kennedy, Tucson CSA

2 quarts of water
5 large beets (try some carrots if you don't have enough beets)
1/4 cup sugar
1 big onion, cut in half
1 tablespoon salt (or less if you don't like a lot of salt, my father did but I don't)
Juice of 4 lemons, or less depending on the size
Sour cream or plain yogurt

Bring water to boil. Add remaining ingredients except for the sour cream. Simmer for 1 hour or until beets are very tender. Discard the onion. Peel beets and put them into a blender or food processor. Pour the cooking liquid in and lemon juice in and blend (I find I need to do it in several batches). My Dad would mix two teaspoons of sour cream during the blending process. But I don't. I prefer to add a tablespoon of sour cream in each bowl when I serve it. Each diner can mix in his/her sour cream. In any case serve cold for lunch or as a first course for dinner. You won't believe how it will cool you down.

Carrot and Fennel Pasta

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a fast and easy recipe, everything is ready by the time the pasta is done cooking. The vegetables, cut into long thin strips, cook quickly. Use a vegetable peeler to cut strips of carrot, and a very sharp knife to cut thin slices of fennel and onion. Butter complements the taste of fennel, but you can use olive oil if you prefer.

2-3 carrots, sliced into thin strips (or grated)
1 bunch fennel, heads sliced crosswise into thin strips, fronds roughly chopped for garnish
1 small onion, cut into thin strips

3 cloves garlic, minced
2 + tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper to taste
Cooked pasta

While pasta is cooking, stir carrots, fennel, onion and garlic into melted butter, in a skillet over medium high heat. Stir often, sprinkling mixture with a little of the boiling pasta water or white wine if it appears too dry. When pasta is cooked through, drain and add to vegetable mixture. Season with salt and pepper and another pat of butter, if desired, and toss to mix. Serve hot.

Tomatillo Avocado Sauce

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a salsa bar standby and is a great taco condiment. This also makes a great dressing for any type of salad. The sauce is just a basic salsa verde recipe, with avocado and sour cream added in.

1/2 pound tomatillos, husked, rinsed
1/2 to 2 jalapenos, finely diced
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves
1/4 cup (firmly packed) fresh cilantro leaves
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice (optional)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 whole ripe avocado, diced
2 tablespoons sour cream or plain yogurt (optional)

Roast tomatillos under the broiler until charred. In a food processor or blender, puree all ingredients until smooth. Add salt to taste. Store in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Sweet Potato Tomatillo Hash

2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into small dice
1 small onion, diced
2 tomatillos, husks removed, cleaned and diced
1-2 cloves garlic
Crumbled goat cheese

In a heavy skillet heat a thin layer of oil or lard. Add sweet potatoes and onions and stir well to coat. Cook stirring occasionally until potatoes begin to brown. Add tomatillos and garlic and mix into hash and continue cooking an additional 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove pan from heat and add cheese to individual servings.