



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 67 ~ December 18, 2006 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Winter '06-'07

Week 3 of 12

This Week's Harvest

Beauregard Sweet Potatoes
Potatoes

Navel Oranges

Nantes Carrots

Easter Egg Radishes

Pak Choi

Spinach

Spring Mix

Recipes

Fruited Greens

Carrots Greens

Thai Carrot Salad with Peanuts

Jicama, Radish and Pepita Salad

Sweet Potato Cranberry Casserole

Pak Choi Tips

Pak Choi is a Chinese cabbage commonly used in stir fry and spring rolls. Separate the leaves and wash well. The green leaf is often cooked separately from the thicker, paler stalk. Use it in stir fries, chopped in salads or add to a soup for the last few minutes of cooking. In a stir fry, cut off the stalks and slice. Cook the stalks for 2 minutes before adding the leaves for 2 minutes. For a quick recipe, chop it and steam for 3-4 minutes. Serve with soy sauce.

Did you know?

Carrots are a great source of vitamin A and beta carotene. Vitamin A is very important for healthy skin, eyes, hair growth, and helps our bodies resist infections. Beta carotene is linked to reducing chronic diseases such as cancer and heart disease. To store the carrots, first remove the greens, since they draw away moisture from the root (see Recipes for using tops). Tightly seal unwashed carrots in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Newsletter Editor:

Neil Diamante

Reminder: Last Pick-up of 2006

This is the last pick-up of 2006. There will be no pickup next week on Dec 25-26. The next pickup at the Historic Y will be on Monday, January 1, 2007 from 4 to 7 pm and Tuesday, January 2, with extended hours, from 7:30 am to 5 pm.

Remote pickup members: please check the next pickup day/time with your pickup host.

Website downtimes

We apologize for our website's down times over the last week. We have been migrating our website to a new web hosting service. The website is now up again. However, until we fully complete the migration, some of the website's features may be missing, including our weekly emails.

Fast Food Nation: The Spinach Chapter

Earlier this fall there was an outbreak of food-borne illness caused by E. coli bacteria found in uncooked spinach in 26 U.S. states. The outbreak was traced to bagged, fresh spinach grown on fields in Salinas Valley, California. The FDA called for bagged fresh spinach to be removed from shelves and warned people not to eat any kind of fresh spinach or fresh spinach-containing products. Samples of cattle manure on pastures surrounding a spinach field tested positive for the same strain of E. coli bacteria. However, the organic produce from those farms was cleared by the FDA.

Farmer Frank insists that there has never been anything wrong with the spinach itself. Rather than the spinach plant itself being the source of the outbreak, as much of the press led the public to believe, it was the manure used on the field. This manure came from nearby feedlots, where cattle were fed on grain heavily dosed with antibiotics, leading to the development of a virulent E. coli strain in the manure.

Farmer Frank buys organic compost from Rovey's Dairy Farm in Glendale, Arizona. Rovey's, an organic dairy, composts its own manure and plant material and ages the compost for six to nine months using standard organic composting methods.

For more information on Farmer Frank's manuring methods, check our November 6, 2006 TCSA Newsletter, #61.

Grass-fed vs. grass-finished

Several of you have asked about the difference between these two terms. "Grass-fed" means the cattle eat grass throughout its life. "Grass-finished" means the cattle eat grass during its "finishing" phase of 90 days or so, when the cattle are put on a high-quality pasture. In neither case are the cattle ever fed grain. The beef which members buy at the CSA is both grass-fed and grass-finished, as opposed to much of the commercially available beef that is called grass-fed, even though it may be grain-finished.

Another question many of you have asked us is about the organic aspects of the beef. While none of it is "certified" organic, our suppliers promise us that their cattle are not injected with hormones, antibiotics and other artificial chemicals. They are, however, humanely raised, and if an animal becomes ill and requires antibiotic treatment, it is later sold in the non-organic market.

Librarian's Choice:

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser (the movie is out now too)

Fruited Greens

Submitted by MARYDVM, TCSA

1 bunch carrots, radishes, or 2 turnips sliced thin
1 apple chopped
1/2 bunch bitter greens (mustard, arugula, kale) chopped
1 bag braising greens
1 orange, peeled, sectioned and chopped.

Heat a small amount of olive oil in a heavy frying pan. When oil is hot add sliced root vegetable and sauté for a minute or two, stirring as needed, until just softening. Add chopped apple and continue to sauté for another minute, then add all greens. When greens are wilted, add chopped orange and serve immediately. The fruits lighten the flavor of the greens. You can use other fruits, such as pears, mangos, or pomegranate seeds, or toss in a handful of dried cranberries and chopped walnuts for a seasonal touch.

Carrot Greens

Your green carrot leaves are loaded with protein, minerals and vitamins. Carrot greens are also antiseptic, so they have been added to mouthwashes and, mixed with honey, used to disinfect sores. They are also diuretic (increase urine flow), and can help treat kidney disease and edema.

The high potassium content of carrot tops can make them bitter, so their use in food is limited. However, carrot tops are edible, so you may mix some in with a mixed lettuce salad. You may also use it for garnish. Or what about a "carrot top pesto vinaigrette"? You can hide the bitterness under the tangy vinegar, and sweeten it slightly with some honey.

Try sautéing the chopped carrot tops lightly in olive oil with garlic and onion. Then add other garden veggies (the carrots themselves, zucchini, tomato, peppers, fresh herbs), sauté some more, then fold the entire garden mish-mash inside a whole wheat tortilla, brown it, and call it a quesadilla. Truly a great vegan treat, and the carrot tops gave a nice crunchy texture. It is a delightful garden feast. I recommend adding your carrot tops to other things you may already have simmering on the stove.

Thai Carrot Salad with Peanuts

3 cups grated carrots
1 cup chopped peanuts

-Chili Vinaigrette-

1/4 cup rice vinegar
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
1 tablespoon orange zest
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon red chili flakes
Finely chopped fresh mint, for garnish

In a food processor, blend all the vinaigrette ingredients. Add the chili flakes last, adding them a little at a time to taste. Wash the carrots and grate into a large bowl. Add half the dressing, saving the rest for another use; it will keep, refrigerated, for up to 1 week. Marinate for 15 to 20 minutes before serving. Garnish with chopped peanuts and mint. Serves 4

Jicama, Radish and Pepita Salad

Bon Appétit, Every-Night Cooking, July 2005

For a main-course salad, add some grilled shrimp or chicken and diced papaya.

1/2 cup olive oil
1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 1/2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 1/4 teaspoons ground cumin
1 5-ounce package butter lettuce mix or baby spinach leaves
2 cups diced peeled jicama
1 scant cup thinly sliced radishes (about 8)
1/3 cup natural shelled pumpkin seeds (pepitas), lightly toasted
1/2 cup coarsely crumbled queso fresco or Cotija cheese

Whisk first 5 ingredients in small bowl. Season dressing with salt and pepper. Toss lettuce, jicama, and radishes in large bowl. Add dressing and toss to coat. Divide salad among 4 plates. Sprinkle with pumpkin seeds and cheese and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Sweet Potato Puree with Brown Sugar and Sherry

Bon Appétit, November 1999, Janet Fletcher

Janet Fletcher, food writer, says, "Sure, I loved sweet potatoes with marshmallows when I was a child, but some tastes you leave behind. Now I prefer a more grown-up preparation, with an intriguing hint of Sherry."

2 pounds medium-size red-skinned sweet potatoes (yams)
2 pounds medium-size tan-skinned sweet potatoes
10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) butter, room temperature
1/4 cup (packed) golden brown sugar
5 tablespoons dry Sherry

Preheat oven to 425°F. Pierce all sweet potatoes in several places with fork. Bake until tender when pierced with knife, about 55 minutes. Cool slightly. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise. Using spoon, scoop potato pulp into large bowl. Add butter and brown sugar to potatoes. Using electric mixer, beat until smooth. Beat in Sherry. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to large saucepan. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.) Rewarm sweet potatoes over medium-low heat, stirring often.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Sweet Potato Cranberry Casserole

Karen Wilison, TCSA member

Into a Casserole dish, layer:

- Baked and sliced sweet potatoes
- Cranberries (raw)
- Oatmeal, Brown Sugar and Butter

Repeat this until you reach the top of the dish.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until cranberries are soft.