



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 169 ~ December 22 and 29, 2008 ~ Online at

www.TucsonCSA.org

Winter 08-09

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- REMINDER -

Christmas CSA Break

Crooked Sky Farms are taking their annual break from Christmas to New Year's day.

There will be no pick-up on Friday, December 26th and Tuesday, December 30th.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

(and remember, you're CSA members, so **eat well!**)

Grass-fed meat orders

We're now taking deposits for an order of grass-fed beef from Josh, which we'll get in early January. It will be sold in assortment packs as usual. A \$20 deposit will hold a pack for you. There may also be some ground beef for sale in one-pound packs, also in early to mid-January.

We also have a few more pastured chickens from Josh. They are the last of this year's batch, after which there will be no chickens available until mid to late Spring. Josh does not grow chickens during winter.



Newsletter Editor(s)

Philippe Waterinckx and Paul Durham



DILL (*Anethum graveolens*)

Fresh or preserved dill enlivens nearly any dish. Dill vinegar makes an exciting vinaigrette, and fresh or dried snipped dill is wonderful stirred into plain yogurt or sour cream sauces. Butter, flecked with dill and parsley, tastes great brushed over grilled fish or used in place of oil in the pan when making scrambled eggs, and don't forget to use a lacy sprig of dill for garnish. A particularly nice flavor marriage is dill and fresh tomatoes, tasty in an easy, refreshing summer soup.

When we get dill from the farm, we usually often get more than can be eaten in one or two meals. It is therefore useful to preserve some of it for future use. You can dry it, salt it, pickle it, or even freeze it.

To dry it, wash it gently in cold water, then pat dry. Find a warm, dark, dry, well-ventilated place, and hang the branches in bunches. Hang drying should be complete in two or three days, but if you need a quick job, try using a food dehydrator. It is very fast and effective, far more so than your oven, whose unreliable heat control can cause loss of flavor and color. When leaves are completely dry, remove them from the stems and store in airtight glass jars away from heat or light. If any condensation forms in the jars, the drying isn't complete. You'll have to re-dry the harvest or lose it to mildew.

Drying isn't the only method of preserving dill. Adventurous herbalists salt the leaves, an unusual method accomplished by layering table salt and dill springs alternately in a glass jar, beginning and ending with salt. Cover the container tightly and store in a cool dark place.

Dill can also be preserved in vinegar. Just drop sprigs into good quality white vinegar, seal tightly, then allow to steep for several weeks. Scented vinegar is an added bonus.

Chopped leaves are easily stored frozen, in single serving packets. No need to defrost either. Just drop the frozen herb directly into the dish while preparation proceeds.

Adapted from Flowers and Garden Magazine, May 1984

FARM NEWS

Farmer Frank reports that he has not been hit by frost yet this winter, whereas the first frost usually hits his field within a week on either side of Thanksgiving. But he's ready for it – there's eggplant in the field covered in frost cloth, and the remaining tomatillos and zucchini (which must be harvested before the frost) will be picked in the next week or so. He's got broccoli and green and purple cabbage that should be ready for harvest in early to mid-January, and rhubarb, fennel and radicchio are also on the way.

One of Farmer Frank's strengths as a farmer is that he is constantly innovating in various ways. This winter he's borrowing an idea from cotton cultivation called "stub planting" and applying it to okra. In stub planting, the farmer cuts the plant back to a stub that's about 6 to 8 inches tall to help it survive the winter. If it works, the plant gets a head start and is productive sooner and in greater amounts. Frank is trying it out with okra because its stalk is similar to that of cotton, but to his knowledge, stub planting has never been used with okra. In addition, he's planting wheat between the okra rows for some additional frost protection. In the spring, he'll plow the wheat back in to enrich the soil and give the okra plants more space and sun. Frank said he'll let us know how it works, and promised he'd admit it if his idea is a failure.

Sweet Butternut Phyllo Triangles

Paula Karrer, CSA Member

One CSA butternut squash (yielding about 1 lb cooked flesh)
½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup almonds, toasted and ground
ground cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger to taste
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ pound phyllo dough, defrosted at room temperature for 2 hours
4 tablespoons butter
extra white sugar for sprinkling between phyllo sheets

Cut the squash in half, place in a buttered baking dish and bake at 350 degrees until soft (30-45 minutes). Let cool slightly and remove the flesh into a bowl. Add the sugar, almonds, spices and vanilla and mix thoroughly. Be sure that the mixture has cooled completely before proceeding.

Lay out one sheet of phyllo dough, brush with melted butter, and sprinkle lightly with sugar. Repeat with 4 more sheets to create a stack 5 sheets thick (no need to butter and sugar the top of the 5th sheet.) Keep remaining phyllo dough covered closely with plastic wrap.

Cut the 5-layer sheet in half, widthwise, and into thirds lengthwise to create 6 rectangular sections. Place a tablespoon or so of squash mixture towards the end of each section. Fold as you would a flag, to create a triangularly shaped package. Seal the open end with butter or moistened fingers. Continue until all phyllo sheets are used.

One half pound of phyllo sheets, each measuring 9 x 14 inches will make about 30 pastries. Don't worry if the phyllo tears or wrinkles - it won't matter.

Bake the pastries for 20-30 minutes until light golden brown. Serve warm or room temperature. Those pastries not eaten that day can be re-crisped in the oven if necessary.

Rice Pilaf with Dill -new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

With a simple salad, this rice could make an easy meal. It can use up a lot of the dill that we get at the CSA.

1 ½ cups long grain white rice
2 tablespoons butter or oil
1 onion, diced
1 cup dill, chopped
2 tablespoons capers
1 large can garbanzo beans, drained
Juice from 1 lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

In a medium sauce pan over medium high heat, cook onion in a bit of oil until beginning to brown. Add butter and rice and cook about 3 minutes, stirring frequently, to toast rice. Add lemon juice, dill, beans, salt and pepper and 2 ¾ cups water to rice. Bring to a boil. Cover rice, reduce heat to low, and cook for 20 minutes. Stir in capers and more salt and pepper and lemon juice to taste.

Turnip and Potato Gratin -new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is an easy recipe to toss in the oven to bake while you prepare the rest of your meal. Depending on the other flavors in the meal, consider layering in a handful of chopped dill to the dish.

3 medium potatoes, thinly sliced
3 medium turnips, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
1-2 tablespoons butter, melted
¾ cup heavy cream (or use whole milk yogurt, thinned with water to make it pourable)
¼ cup bread crumbs
¼ cup crumbled or shredded cheese
salt and pepper
dill, if desired

Saute onions in a small amount of oil until lightly browned. Add butter and vegetables and cook for about 5 minutes. In a small casserole dish, make layers of veggie mixture, drizzling each layer with cream and sprinkling with a bit of salt and pepper. Top with bread crumbs and cheese, cover with foil, and bake in a 375 degree oven for about 40 minutes, until cooked through. Remove foil and cook about 10 more minutes until top is golden brown.

Butternut Squash and Swiss Chard -new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA



Cut off the neck of your butternut right before the bulb. (Use the bulb elsewhere, perhaps alongside acorn squash in another dish.) You can then use the cut end as a stable rest so that you can easily peel the butternut. Using a paring knife works best. Just work your way around the outside of the squash peeling down. You can then lay the neck lengthwise and cut the squash into nice thin circles. If the squash is cut thinly, it will cook relatively fast. Use the stems of your Swiss chard as well as the greens. Red chard will look particularly nice with the orange squash.

Top of one butternut squash, peeled and sliced into thin rounds
1 bunch Swiss chard, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon oil
¼ cup toasted pecans, chopped
Balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, squash and chard stems and toss well to coat with oil. Cook about five minutes, stirring often to prevent burning. When squash is nearly tender, add greens, sprinkle with a small amount of water and cover skillet to steam greens. Cook, covered, for another 5 minutes. When squash is tender, drizzle dish with balsamic vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss in pecans. At this point you have a great topping for a pizza with white sauce or simple ricotta cheese!