



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 230 ~ March 15, 2010 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

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More recipes on our online
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Reminder: Please Do Not Rummage Through The Produce Boxes

We handle the produce as little as possible to keep it fresh and prevent bruising and spoiling. We ask that you do the same. Just carefully pick the number of items indicated on each box and then move on to the next box.

Mark Your Calendar: Trip to Crooked Sky Farms

April 18, from 10 am to 1 pm.

Come check out where your vegetables grow and meet Farmer Frank and his crew.

Details and directions are on our Facebook page and will be announced here closer to the date.



DIET FOR A HOT PLANET: The Climate Crisis at the End of Your Fork and What You Can Do About It

In her latest book, Diet for a Hot Planet, author and sustainable food advocate Anna Lappé deftly explains the links between the global food system and climate change, and offers inspiration for making sustainable food choices that can provide a catalyst for transforming the environment.

Diet for a Hot Planet will be released by Bloomsbury USA on March 30.

LET'S CELEBRATE CITRUS!

With Tucson's orange blossom season just around the corner, let's kick off this year's citrus extravaganza! Join Lori in the courtyard during this week's pickup hours to enjoy all kinds of citrusy delights. We're sure you will want the recipes: you will find them on our online recipe archive.



GREEN GARLIC, A SPRINGTIME DELICACY



Green garlic is young garlic which is harvested before the cloves have begun to mature. It resembles overgrown scallion or green onions, with a deep green stalk and a pale white bulb. It is sometimes called spring garlic and baby garlic.

When garlic is grown to maturity, it is harvested when the lower part of the stalk visible above the ground starts to turn brown. The bulb of the garlic has by then separated into garlic cloves, and it is cured so that it will last in storage. In our climate, garlic is typically harvested in May-June, whereas green garlic is harvested in February-March, when the stalks are still totally green.

The whole plant, including the leaves, can be used raw or cooked. When cooked, the green garlic sweetens, lending a new layer of depth to a dish. To use, trim off root ends and the tough part of the green leaves. Chop or slice the rest and use as you would green onions or garlic, noting that it is stronger than the former but milder than the latter.

Green garlic can be stored under refrigeration up to a week. It will not cure like regular garlic, so make sure not to let it sit for too long in your refrigerator.

PLANT STARTS

In spring time, Crooked Sky Farms occasionally spoils us with a variety of plant starts. You may find that your share includes a little container with a growing plant in it. It may be basil, tomatoes, zucchini, squash, melons, chiles, eggplant, Indian sacred tobacco and more, although we don't usually get them all at once. We also don't always know what specific varieties they are, because the farm grows many kinds and the labels sometimes get lost or misplaced between the time they are planted and the time they reach us. So, there is often some mystery involved...

Plant your start in partial shade in your garden or in a pot and see what it turns into. What you thought was a squash may turn out to be a cucumber.

LETTUCE TELL YOU ABOUT ICEBERGS

It is hardly necessary to introduce the most popular type of lettuce in the United States. The USDA claims that the average American eats 22 pounds of iceberg lettuce per year. Romaine runs a distant second, about 8 pounds.

Yet, and this doesn't really come as a surprise, CSA members don't seem to be average Americans: when we had a choice of different lettuce heads in our shares a few weeks ago, many of you stayed away from the iceberg. This is understandable. But remember that vegetables grown organically and with care are usually better than those grown industrially. If you haven't tried the iceberg lettuce from Crooked Sky Farms, its sweetness and flavor may surprise you.

Planning For A Greenless Summer: Blanching And Freezing Greens

Although this may seem hard to believe at the moment, we will stop getting greens soon and we won't get any for months.

Wendy, one of our volunteers, reminded me of good and simple strategy that achieves two goals: one, it reduces the amount of greens you're eating right now, in case you are getting tired of them, and two, it will provide you with some greens when there won't be any fresh ones available.

So, to set aside your greens for future use, just blanch and freeze them.

Wash and trim your greens and slice them in ribbons.

In a pot, boil one gallon of water for a pound of vegetables. Put the vegetables in a wire basket, submerge them completely in the boiling water, cover with a lid, and begin timing.

If you don't have a basket that fits your pot, you can also toss the greens in to the boiling water and retrieve them with a slotted spoon.

Timing: blanching time takes between 2 and 4 minutes for most vegetables. As a rule of thumb, I allow 2 minutes for tender ones and 4 minutes for tougher or chunkier ones. Leafy greens take 2 to 2 ½ minutes.

Shake the basket a couple of times to ensure that all vegetable surfaces are exposed to the heat. After the allotted time, remove the basket, and plunge the vegetables into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Once cool, remove them, drain thoroughly, and package for freezing. They will keep up to 6 months in the freezer.

Swiss Chard with Pine Nuts and Raisins

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Swiss chard is often accompanied by raisins and pine nuts in a wide range of dishes. Here is the basic recipe, with much room for creativity (think quiche, pasta salad, lasagna, enchiladas...)

2 bunches Swiss chard, (you can substitute spinach for one of the bunches), chopped roughly, stems diced

1/3 cup pine nuts

2 tablespoons oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1/4 cup golden raisins, finely chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil over medium high heat, add onion, sauté for about 5 minutes then add chard, pine nuts, raisins and a splash of water. Cook, stirring often, until chard is well wilted. Season with salt and pepper and a dash of balsamic vinegar, if desired.



Using Lots of Greens

Rita Silverberg, Tucson CSA

Here is a way to efficiently use lots of green, while saving the color and nutritional value as well.

Clean and trim a bunch (or more) of greens. Drain well. Chop in food processor – or in a wooden bowl with a chopping blade.

You will now have reduced the volume of greens considerably, making them much easier to add to dishes (see list below.) Simmer briefly (1-3 minutes) in broth to knock down the “sharpness” of taste. If the greens are mild, or you like the sharpness, you can skip the simmering. Strain chopped greens and save the broth.

You can add these “processed” greens to:

Casseroles

Omelets and frittatas

Nut, grain, or meat loaves

Pilafs

Polenta

Pasta dishes

Veggie pancakes

Enchiladas

You name it!

Use the cooking broth for a gravy or sauce for the dish you make with the greens. You've still got all the vitamins! Great taste! Great color!

Citrus Curd

Adapted from How to be a Domestic Goddess, by Nigella Lawson

Citrus curd, most commonly associated with lemon or lime, is a delicious way to transform citrus. Use any citrus you like. Tangelos and grapefruits will work well on their own as they have a nice, tart flavor. If you want to use sweeter citrus, make sure to use half lemon juice to keep the tart flavor. The curd will freeze well for future use.

6 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 large eggs

½ cup sugar

½ cup citrus juice

About 1 tablespoon citrus zest

Melt butter in a saucepan over low heat. Add the rest of the ingredients, stirring well to prevent burning and clumps. Cook, stirring, until the mixture has thickened to a mayonnaise-like consistency. Pour into a jar, where mixture will continue to thicken into a spreadable curd. Refrigerate and use within one week, or freeze.

