



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer 2013

Harvest list is online

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Freezing Roasted Chiles

Roasted chiles freeze really well, and you can keep them for times later in the year when we won't have any. We recommend that you transfer them to a freezer bag and squeeze most of the air out of the bag before freezing, to avoid freezer burn.

To thaw, just dunk the frozen bag in a bowl of warm water, then peel and de-seed them. They will actually be easier to peel after having been frozen.

Farm News

We appreciate your patience as the farm is currently transitioning to fall crops. The weather has been cooler than usual and fall crops are a little late.

The farm also has had a bad stretch this summer, particularly in finding competent farm crew. It's hard to work on the farm, especially during summer, and this past summer a particular high number of harvesters left and had to be replaced and trained. However, for a while the farm did not have enough harvesters. All of this has had an impact on the quality of the shares: for example, some crops were harvested too early by inexperienced harvesters. However, things are now getting under control.

THE BEAUREGARD SWEET POTATO



As most of you know, the sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) is not a potato at all, but a tuber from a vine belonging to the Convolvulaceae family, the same family as that of the morning glory. The Latin species name, *Ipomoea batatas*, sounds remarkably like the existing Spanish word for potato, *patata* at the time Columbus introduced it to Europe. Indeed, "potato"

meant sweet potato in Europe until nearly a half-century later, when what we now call the potato, *Solanum tuberosum* ("papa" in its native Quechua), landed there.

The plump and curvaceous sweet potatoes we get in our shares are **Beauregards**, which is the primary commercial type of sweet potato grown in the U.S. Louisiana led the United States in sweet potato production until 1970, when North Carolina developed a new variety called Jewel, a high-yielding variety that is well-adapted to North Carolina's sandy soils. Jewel soon took over as the most popular sweet potato variety in the United States and North Carolina became the market leader for sweet potatoes. As a result, sweet potato production in Louisiana plummeted from more than 100,000 acres in the 1940s to fewer than 20,000 acres by 1980. Louisiana, however, fought back in the late 1980's by developing the Beauregard variety, named after General Pierre Beauregard who fired the first shot in the Civil War in 1861. The Beauregard sweet potato is an extremely high-yielder. It is also quick-maturing, resistant to cracking, pests, and rot, and has a longer storage life than Jewel. It now has been accepted by farmers everywhere, including small-scale farmers such as our own Farmer Frank. Frank particularly likes the Beauregard because it doesn't grow too deep in the soil, making it easier to dig out at harvest time.

Although these sweet potatoes may sometimes have strange shapes and can look somewhat bruised and pitted, their looks do not affect their quality and flavor. The Beauregard sweet potato has a red-brown skin with a moist, sweet, orange flesh. It stores well and will rarely rot, although if kept on your counter top for too long, it may start sprouting shoots (commercial, non-organic sweet potatoes may not sprout shoots because they are generally treated with growth retardant). If sprouting occurs, a cool thing to do is to plant the sweet potato in a pot and just let it grow. It is a beautiful trailing vine with thick heart-shaped leaves and morning glory-like flowers.

Sweet potatoes are rich in complex carbohydrates, which is one of the reasons they have been ranked number one in nutrition of all vegetables by nutritionists at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Other points were given for high content of fiber, protein, vitamin A precursor, vitamin C, iron, and calcium. They are a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory food.

Sweet potatoes are often called yams. However, sweet potatoes and yams are different plants. Sweet potatoes originated from Central and South America whereas yams (*Dioscorea*) are from the Dioscoreaceae family and originated from Africa and Asia. The flesh of both sweet potatoes and yams can range from white to purple depending on the variety.

Braised Sweet Potatoes and Roasted Chiles

Philippe Waterinckx, Tucson CSA

Roasted chiles (to taste), peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped
3 sweet potatoes, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium-sized onion, chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Salt and pepper

In a skillet, heat olive oil to medium hot. Add sweet potatoes, onions and cumin. Cover and braise until tender (15-20 minutes), stirring occasionally. After 10 minutes, incorporate roasted chiles. Continue to stir occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with rice.

Zucchini and Chile Cornbread

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a great cornbread to serve with a soup or stew. Add cheddar or goat cheese to the recipe if you like.

1 cup flour
¾ cup cornmeal
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup yogurt
1 egg
2 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons melted butter, or oil
1 cup shredded zucchini
2 roasted chiles, peeled, seeded and chopped

Set shredded zucchini in a colander to drain. Preheat oven to 400°. Mix together dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together egg, yogurt, butter and honey. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir gently. Add zucchini and chiles and stir until just combined. Pour batter into greased muffin tins or an 8 inch square baking pan. Bake 25-30 minutes (or about 20 minutes for muffins). The top will spring back when touched and a toothpick will come out clean when cornbread is done.

Squash Mint Dip

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Here is a really different way to use your summer squash. If you can, cut the squash into long strips and grill for a smokier depth. You can also use eggplant instead of squash.

1 large squash, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon crushed dry mint
Red pepper flakes, to taste
1/2 to 3/4 cup greek yogurt or labneh
Salt to taste

Chopped walnuts for garnish

In one tablespoon of oil, sauté squash, garlic and 1/2 of mint over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Cook about 8 minutes, until squash is tender and slightly brown. Let cool. In a food processor, combine squash mixture with yogurt or labneh and a pinch of salt, pulse until well blended and mostly smooth. Adjust salt to taste.

To serve, heat remaining tablespoon of oil over medium high heat. When sizzling hot (test with a tiny drop of water that should sizzle away immediately) remove from heat and add remaining mint and red chile flakes and stir well. Put squash mixture into a medium size bowl and pour oil mixture over the top. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts and serve with pita or baguette for dipping.

Spiced Cucumber Salad

1-2 cucumbers, peeled if desired
1/2 teaspoon sesame seeds
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon soy sauce
1/2 tablespoon sesame oil
1/4 teaspoon hot soybean paste
A few drops of lemon juice

Clean and peel the cucumber. Cut into slices, and then smaller pieces. Add salt and mix. Let salt soak in for 15 minutes. Rinse cucumber and dry it. Mix together sesame seed, sugar, soy sauce, hot soybean paste, and lemon. Pour over cucumbers and toss to coat. Chill and serve.

Chilled Cucumber Avocado Soup

Tucson CSA

Lots of cucumber soup recipes call for cream or yogurt. This vegan version is delicious, but you can add a dollop of yogurt or sour cream to serve, if you like.

2 or 3 cucumbers, peeled and chopped
1 avocado, roughly chopped
1/2-3/4 cup veggie stock (or water)
1/2 teaspoon mustard
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup fresh dill, chopped
1/2 cup finely chopped mixed vegetable (cucumbers, bell peppers or hot peppers, onions and corn kernels would all be good options)
1/2 cup small croutons
1 lemon, juiced

In a food processor or blender, purée chopped cucumbers, avocado, veggie stock, mustard, and add salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a bowl. Chill soup until ready to eat. Before serving, stir in dill and lemon juice. Garnish soup with diced vegetables, croutons and dill sprigs.