



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

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Farmer's Notebook

Our sweet corn harvest continues this week, one of many crops that are doing quite well this season. While sweet corn is a mainstay of roadside farm stands, it is not as common in CSA boxes, probably because it is so difficult to grow using organic methods.

The first challenge we face is that corn seed is very susceptible to rot in cold spring soil. To counter this, conventional growers use fungicide-treated seeds, and plant seeds into black plastic to warm the soil. Because we don't use either of these inputs, we must wait to plant corn until the soil warms, thus delaying the first harvest date.

A second challenge is that sweet corn requires a lot of nitrogen, which conventionally is supplied by commercial chemical fertilizers. Because we do not use chemical fertilizer, you may find your Foxtail ears a bit smaller than conventional corn.

A third challenge is insect pests: caterpillars that characteristically eat the tip or burrow into the base of ears. Conventional growers control these pests with pesticides or by using genetically engineered seeds. So far, our relative isolation from other sweet corn farms has helped control major insect pressure. If you do find an occasional caterpillar in your corn, just break off the affected area and enjoy the rest.

The final challenge, common to both conventional and organic farms, is warm-blooded animal pests. Crows, deer, rabbits and raccoons can devastate corn from the minute it germinates right up until harvest time. Our fencing keeps out most mammals, but crows have become Eric's nemesis. So far, his various tricks are doing their job this year.

As you enjoy your Foxtail corn, we hope this information about its journey helps you appreciate it all the more! ~ Rachel

This Week's Harvest

Our best guess for what will be in this week's share boxes – subject to change at harvest & packing time.

spaghetti squash – this distinctive squash – falling somewhere between a summer and winter squash - truly does make a delicious, low-carb substitute for pasta. Pierce a few times with a knife to vent and bake at 375°F for about an hour. Let cool, then slice in half, scoop out and discard seeds, and separate flesh into strands with a fork. Delicious with simple tomato sauce or tossed with olive oil, cracked black pepper and grated fresh Parmesan. Best stored at 50-60° (root cellar conditions), but will last a few weeks at room temperature or may be refrigerated.

Also...

**carrots ~ cucumbers ~ green beans ~
eggplant ~ lettuce ~ Red Russian kale ~
summer squash (large shares) ~
sweet corn ~ sweet peppers ~ tomatoes**

No fruit shares this week. Fruit will resume next week.

Too many veggies?

No question it's been a bountiful harvest this season. If you can't use everything in your share yourself, please consider donating extra to others in our community who don't have enough to eat.

Since 2004, Capital Roots' Squash Hunger program has collected and distributed fresh produce to area food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens. You can bring extra fresh produce to any of their convenient sites around the region:

www.capitalroots.org/programs/squash-hunger/squash-hunger-sites/



Recipe of the Week: Chicken Joe

This has become an all-family favorite in our summer rotation. Like most stews, it's even better reheated the next day.

- 3 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 2 onions, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 ½ tbs chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbs fresh chopped oregano or 1 tsp dried
- ¼ tsp cayenne (add more to taste!)
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock or water
- 3 red tomatoes, diced, including all the juice!
- 1 bottle amber beer
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbs yellow cornmeal
- 2 medium zucchini, cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 red or green sweet pepper, diced
- 2 pounds cooked boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 cups cooked black beans (or 1 can)
- 3 ears fresh sweet corn kernels

In a large pot, heat olive oil. Add onions, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Remove cover and continue cooking to brown onions, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, chili powder, cumin, oregano and cayenne. Stir 1-2 minutes to lightly toast spices. Add stock, tomatoes, beer, sugar, salt and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer partially covered for 40 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf.

Return to a gentle boil. Sprinkle cornmeal to dust the surface, then stir to blend well with liquid. Add zucchini, carrots and peppers and cook for 5 minutes. Add chicken, reduce heat, and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add black beans and corn and cook 5 minutes more. Serve with cornbread or tortilla chips.

Another Recipe: Vegetable Moussaka

From Recipes from America's Small Farms.

- extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lg or 2 medium eggplant and/or summer squash, peeled and cut into ¼" thick slices
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 tbs butter
- 2 medium potatoes, thinly sliced
- ½ tbs chopped fresh oregano
- ½ tsp kosher salt + freshly ground pepper
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 4 oz goat or feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 medium tomatoes, sliced ¼ inch thick
- ½ cup plain low fat Greek-style yogurt
- 2 tbs chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ tsp lemon juice

Heat ½ tbs olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook eggplant/ squash slices ~ 3 minutes each side, pressing firmly with the spatula to make full contact with the pan. Set aside cooked slices. In same pan, sauté onions and garlic in another tbs oil for 2-3 minutes.

Heat oven to 350°F. Spread butter around inside of 9" square baking dish. Make a layer of potatoes, sprinkle with half the oregano, salt and black pepper, add half the eggplant/ squash, sprinkle with half the garam masala and half the cheese. Top with half the tomato slices. Add the onion and garlic mixture. Repeat potato, eggplant/squash, cheese and tomato layers. Bake uncovered ~ 45-60 minutes, until tender.

Combine yogurt, parsley and lemon juice in a bowl. To serve, top moussaka with yogurt sauce.



From the archives

Need more recipe ideas? CSA newsletters back to 2010 are on our website:

www.foxtailcommunityfarm.com/MemberNewsletters.html

Here are a few favorites to re-visit this week:

- ◆ *Aug 25 2013 – Fresh Corn Tamales*
- ◆ *Aug 24 2014 – Summer Vegetable & Brown Rice Gratin*
- ◆ *Aug 23 2010 – Summer Squash & White Bean Sauté*