



The Weekly Weeder

A weekly publication for CSA members

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Box Contents & Tips

Basil

Carrots

Celery— with the dry weather the celery is not as nice as usual, but it still makes a great addition to soups and salads.

Edamame— see recipe on back

Melon— those who didn't get one last week

Pepper, Green Bell— Full Shares Only

Pepper, Red Bell: Coming nicely now, though some are not very pretty they are still edible.

Pepper, Hot: Not using the hot peppers in your cuisine now? Toss them whole into a freezer bag for use this winter in your chili, soups and stews!

Hungarian Hot Wax - yellow; mild 1 of 5 hotness

Cherry Bomb—small red; 4 of 5 hotness

Georgia Flame or Red Paper Lantern—red chile shape; 5 of 5 hotness

Sweet Corn: Last week

Swiss Chard

Tomatoes, Heirloom Slicers

Tomatoes, Cherry's:

Zucchini & Patty Pan: Starting to decrease in production, but they'll continue to trickle in for a few more weeks.



I just can't wait to get out there and pick those tomatoes!

Coming Soon...

More melons, carrots, celery, kale and more!

News from the Farm

There is definitely the scent of fall in the air on these cool mornings. The summer crops are starting to look tired and their yellowing leaves are telling us that the end is near. This week is likely the peak of tomatoes. We wonder if you are feeling a bit overwhelmed by the quantity of tomatoes that we have been giving you. But we also want to share the bounty when and where it exists, as soon there won't be any. CSA is all about sharing the bounty, but many people forget that it is about sharing the seasonal shortages brought on by weather and other challenges.

I don't know if you realize it or not, CSA is a way we can change our food system. Besides our CSA we also sell at farmers market, and to a few food cooperatives. While these markets are important to our bottom line, our goal is to grow our CSA so that it is our only market. As you are aware most food cooperatives are jumping on the "buy local" band wagon— which is an excellent marketing tactic. However, I wonder if they are really interested in changing our food system to support the local small scale farmer or if they just want a good slogan.

First a little background: twice a week we send our availability list with prices and quantities to the produce buyers at a few coops. They then can place their order. We have been growing vegetables on a fairly large scale for 8 years and we have gained a good understanding of our production costs and set our prices accordingly. They then place their orders and markup the product on average 35 percent to maintain their profit margins.

All too often the buyers want us to set our prices based upon what is coming from California and other wholesalers. The California farmers are extremely large scale, they often don't pay their workers a living wage, and they have much of their production costs subsidized from the federal government. While these stores talk out one side of their mouth about buying local and supporting local farmers, they tell us out of the other side that we can't set our prices according to the actual cost of our production, but we have meet or beat prices that are not based in reality— simply so they can maintain their profit margins. What about the farmer's profit margins? What about the true cost to raise, weed, harvest, wash, and sort those carrots? Some local farmers accept their demands and sell their crops for less than what they are worth, thereby undercutting their neighbor and perpetuating a broken system.

We do have a broken food system, one that does not allow us local, small farms equal footing as those out of state industrial factory farms— sure they are organic but are they sustainable without government support? If we want to keep our produce departments fully stocked with fresh high quality local food then something has to change.

There are a few brave souls who dare to put a dent into the machine and one is Roger at the Peoples Food Coop. He has been fighting the good fight for years and despite pressure from above he is showing that it can we can have a locally based food system and still maintain profitability.

However, you are greatest agents of change, you are giving us small farms a chance to survive and even thrive outside of a broken system. The purchase of your CSA share is one small act in revolutionizing our the economy of our Agriculture and we want to thank you for taking this one small and brave step towards fixing what has been broken for years.

Thank You!- Mat

Recipes! Recipes! Recipes!

Edamame

Strip all of the pods off of your soybean bunch and boil them whole in salted water for 5 minutes.

Start timing once the water returns to a boil, Drain the pods, liberally salt them, and then slip the seeds out of the pods directly into your mouth.

Have a discard bowl handy for the shells.

You may never want to eat potato chips again!

Garden Fresh Tomato Soup

From Allrecipes.com

- 4 Cups Diced Tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup chopped carrot
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 3 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 drops hot pepper sauce

1.Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Saute onion and garlic until onion is tender.2.Add carrot and celery; cook 7 to 9 minutes until tender, stirring frequently. Stir in tomatoes, broth, salt, thyme, pepper and hot pepper sauce. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 20 minutes, stirring frequently. Puree until smooth and creamy.

Bulletin Board:

Signup for the winter share— space is limited so don't miss the opportunity to extend your CSA experience.

The winter box extends the season with 4 boxes delivered on Wednesdays from December 3 - December 22. Members can select any of our current pickup sites. Our winter shares are delivered in time for the Holiday's. Prepare your feasts with frost sweetened spinach and brussels sprouts; hearty squash and celery root; traditional storage vegetable of turnips, rutabagas and beets; and staples of garlic, onions, carrots and much more..... The cost is \$150.00. Please download the signup form from our website: www.ridgelandharvest.com or give us a call at 608-675-3855 or email csa@ridgelandharvest.com with any questions.

RIDGELANDHARVEST RAGOUT

From CSA Member Jane Rowe

- 2 med. onions, chopped
- 2-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 med. Italian or several skinny Asian, eggplants, peeled & cubed into 1" chunks
- 1 each red & green sweet peppers, cubed
- 1 bulb fennel, thinly sliced & cut into small chunks (optional but worthy!)
- 6-8 med. tomatoes, red and/or yellow, peeled (after immersion in hot water to loosen skin) and chopped
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. dried dill (or 2 Tbsp. fresh)
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 bunches Swiss chard, stems and leaves chopped or sliced (3-4 cups of spinach, chopped a bit works fine, too)
- salt pepper and, if desired 1 or 2 hot peppers, to taste

Sauté onions and garlic slowly in 4 qt. stewpot until translucent. Add eggplant, peppers, tomatoes (with some additional water—maybe 1/2 cup) fennel pieces and salt to pot. (dried dill, too—fresh would be added with greens later.) Simmer slowly in covered pot until eggplant is tender (maybe 15 min.) and then add lemon juice and chard or spinach. Simmer until greens are just barely tender. Correct seasonings.

This is good on just about any pasta, but we LOVE it on polenta and it's really easy to make while the ragout is simmering

Carrot Zucchini Bread

- 3 egg whites, whipped.
 - 1/2 cup of applesauce, room temperature.
 - 1/2 cup of orange juice, room temperature.
 - 1 teaspoon of orange extract.
 - 2 teaspoons of vanilla.
 - 2 cups of zucchini, grated.
 - 1 cup of carrot, grated.
 - 3 cups of flour.
 - 1/2 cup of sugar.
 - 1 tablespoon of cinnamon.
 - 1/2 teaspoon of salt.
 - 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder.
 - 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda.
- Instructions for Carrot Zucchini Bread:
Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).

Prepare pans with cooking spray and flour.

In a suitably sized mixing bowl, combine the egg whites, applesauce, orange juice, orange extract, vanilla, grated zucchini and grated carrots.

In another mixing bowl, combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, salt, baking powder and baking soda.

Mix wet ingredients with dry ingredients just until moistened.

Pour the batter into your pan and bake for 60 minutes.