

WEEK 5

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM

CSA Newsletter



OF SUN AND RAIN

JULY 9, 2009

In the last two weeks we have read about two of our six farm apprentices here for the 2009 year. (There will be four more apprentice updates coming in future weeks.) Why bother to be introduced to the seasonal crop of farm apprentices? These are the individual people that harvest for you, carefully wrapping green rubber bands around your bunches, decide which size zucchini is the right size to take from the plant, use water to spray the vast quantities of mud off of your root crops. Each apprentice brings different previous experiences, and each learns to make judgment calls on the farm that directly affect your meals. Your CSA share is a direct result of all of us getting the work and ongoing rhythms of the farm into our bones, working hard every day, a lot of teaching and learning, some laughing along the way, and yes, more hard work.

On July 4 it was finally sunny all day long, not a single rain shower. This hasn't happened in about three weeks here. The soil is beginning to dry out a bit, but needs more sun, wind, time and patience before we can drive tractors over the fields to prepare more beds for the late crops of zucchinis, kales and lettuces. Some plants in the vegetable fields and in the pastures seem like their roots may have gotten water logged, so they are not necessarily growing as fast as they would otherwise if we had had even a few dry days in the past three weeks. The soil can act like a diaphragm, and it, too, needs to breathe, to connect the whole living plant above ground and below ground. Luckily for us, the rate of breath for the soil is slow and long, so with some dry weather now, we can catch up. I think both the soil and the farmers are glad to see the sun.

Because of the extended rain, there may be an effect of odd pollination happening if the enormous diversity of insect activity has slowed down. Insects that are usually out and about visiting flowers of cucumber plants, tomatoes and the wild hedgerow flowers are somewhat, though not completely, deterred by rain, wet and cool cloudy weather. The Farmscape Ecology Program here at Hawthorne Valley Farm, www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org/fep/fep.htm, has coincidentally embarked on a serious insect study this year around the vegetable fields. Did you know there are more than thirty native bee species here in Columbia County? Martin Holdrege, a senior last year at the Hawthorne Valley School, was the first to catalogue and record many of those native bee species. Thank you, Martin and the Farmscape Ecology Program, for showing us how interesting and interconnected our agricultural landscape is. (Also in the June 30 Science Times section of the New York Times, there was an article about fireflies, which are here on the farm in abundance!)

-Farmer Katy



Coming Soon

Next Week's Anticipated Harvest

Mint
Cucumbers
Zucchini
Red mini onions
Rainbow chard
Lettuce

Washing Lettuce & keeping it fresh

We've been getting so much lettuce here lately, it seems hard to keep up with using it. But if you take a few moments to properly wash and dry it, it should last more than a week. The best method is a "salad spinner", but if you don't have one, you can gently wash the lettuce, shake most of the water off, then dry it on paper towels. Once it's mostly dry, roll it up in a new dry paper towel as shown, and store in a plastic bag. Take a few moments at the beginning of the week, and you'll have fresh "non-slimy" lettuce all week!



A DIVERSIFIED
DEMETER-CERTIFIED
BIODYNAMIC FARM LOCATED
IN MID-UPSTATE NEW YORK.



Zucchini Relish

2 medium zucchini
1 large onion
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, finely chopped
1 teaspoon fresh ginger root, grated
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon salt

Heat the grill and prepare it for direct grilling.

[Chef's note: Direct grilling requires the coals or gas grill to be set for high heat -- this allows for fast searing and quick cooking.]

Cut zucchini lengthwise into half-inch slices. Cut onion crosswise into half-inch slices. Brush zucchini and onion with the vegetable oil. Grill the zucchini and onion uncovered 4 inches from high heat for 5 to 10 minutes, turning once, until crisp-tender. Remove vegetables from the grill and let cool for about 10 minutes.

Chop the zucchini and the onion into fine pieces. Mix the zucchini and onion with the remaining ingredients in non-metal bowl.

[Chef's note: The use of a non-metal bowl will ensure the relish ingredients don't pick up a metallic taste.]

Cover and refrigerate the relish at least 1 hour to blend the flavors. This relish can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two days.

Stir the relish before serving over your favorite grilled steak or chicken.

Recipe by Lia Soscia

<http://www.culinarymedianetwork.com/zucchini-relish/>



Italian Pork Chops & Leeks

3/4 cup olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons sage
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon thyme
1/2 teaspoon rosemary, dried
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
4 pork chops, bone in
4 medium leeks, white part only
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil, extra virgin
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Chops: Combine oil, garlic, sage, oregano, thyme, and rosemary, whisk in the balsamic vinegar, and set 1 TB of the marinade aside. Coat pork chops and marinade overnight, if possible. Prep a grill or broiler. Clean leeks, and cut in half, brushing with reserved marinade. Remove pork from marinade, shake off excess. Season with salt and pepper. Grill chops and leeks. Cook the leeks until tender, about 15 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes. Grill the chops until brown on the outside, but still tender. (145°)

Dressing: Whisk oil, vinegar, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Drizzle cooked leeks with the dressing and set chops on top.

What to do with all these beets!

From a discussion on "Cooking Away My CSA" listserv on Google Groups:

"Roast them in the oven. I wrap them in tin foil add a little water and roast till fork tender. You can do the same thing on the grill if you happen to be grilling that day."

-MrAlps

"I like mine sliced and sauteed in some olive oil and garlic. Easy and tasty. You can even add the greens and some onions to the mix."

-Ami

"MMM. love roasted beets. slice them up and then serve them with fresh goat cheese and arugula, with a balsamic reduction."

-Amy

"Last year I made a beet and potato rosti (think massive latke) that was freaking delicious!
<http://dailyunadventures.blogspot.com/2008/08/beet-and-potato-roesti...>

Also, I second roasting them and tossing them in a salad with goat or blue cheese."

-Katerina

I'd love to print what YOU love to do with our veggies! Please send me your simple short tips for chard & zucchini.

remarkablepalate@gmail.com

-Chef Mark

Tuscan Kale and White Bean Soup

Ingredients

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup diced onion
4 large garlic cloves, chopped
1 quart Vegetable Broth
4 cups packed chopped kale
1 14.5-ounce can Italian-Style Diced Tomatoes
1 14.5-ounce can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
2 large carrots, peeled and sliced

Method

In large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion; cook 3 minutes. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes. Add broth, kale, tomatoes and carrots, and cover; cook 5 minutes or until kale is tender. Add beans; heat thoroughly. Serve hot.

Nutrition

Per serving (about 23oz/656g-wt.): 280 calories (100 from fat), 12g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 1140mg sodium, 36g total carbohydrate (8g dietary fiber, 7g sugar), 8g protein

<http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/recipes/recipe.php?recipeld=2451>

photo from

<http://besottedgourmet.com/2009/04/10/a-real-veggie-dish-tuscan-white-bean-soup-with-kale/>

