

WEEK 12

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM



CSA Newsletter



THE TOMATO BLIGHT

AUGUST 27, 2009

Tomatoes.... We wish we had them for all of us to eat, in all their glorious colors and subtle flavors. We don't have a single one. We didn't spray copper, a controversial fungicide allowable under some organic standards, that some say would have staved off the late blight on our tomatoes for at least a little while. Under Biodynamic standards, copper is allowable only three times. (We are certified Biodynamic by the Demeter Association.) This season the organic farmers that did choose to use copper sprayed copper many, many more times than three, and still don't have a strong tomato crop. June and July were so consistently wet that spraying after every rain became quite a job. Copper is powerful and kills both beneficial and pathogenic fungi in the soil and on the plants. Some farmers worried about the longer term affects of spraying copper on the beneficial organisms in the soil. Building the soil, the soil structure and beneficial organisms that live in the soil, is really the main job of any sustainable farmer. Without a healthy soil system, not much can grow without using a lot of inputs from manufactured fertilizers and manufactured soil amendments (none of which are used here – we use only compost made from our own farm materials). The decision can be a hard one: to spray copper to save some of a tomato harvest this year, or to forgo the current tomato harvest in favor of a longer term soil health, not to mention that some people are also very sensitive to copper. The copper spray can drift onto other crops if there is any breeze, and if those crops are near to harvest, the copper may not have enough time to degrade to an allowable standard before harvest time. A person spraying the copper needs to wear special protection to prevent inhaling the copper, or copper coming in contact with any exposed skin or the eyes. With our vegetable crop rotation closely spaced in the field, we decided not to risk contaminating the other crops with copper drift. With all the children on the farm, we decided not to risk any accidental exposure to copper. With our Biodynamic certification, a certification that is even more rigorous than the organic standard, spraying copper a total of three times would likely have made no difference to the tomato plants by harvest time anyway.

Maybe this is too much technical information for most tomato eaters; really, we just want to eat a good tomato. I certainly miss the heirloom tomatoes especially. This is just to let you know some of what goes into growing a good tomato, what choices must be made this year, and how your farmers have been making decisions about your vegetables and your farm.

-farmer Katy



Coming Soon

Next Week's Anticipated Harvest

Delicata winter squash
potatoes
string beans
rainbow chard
yellow onions
lettuce

Basil-Mint Granita

3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
3/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
3/4 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
2 tablespoons grated lime peel
1 1/2 cups fresh lime juice
1 1/4 cups water

Mix sugar, chopped mint, basil, and lime peel in medium bowl. Mash with wooden spoon until herbs turn dark green, about 3 minutes. Stir in lime juice and 1 1/4 cups water. Let stand 1 hour. Strain into large bowl, pressing on solids. Transfer 1/2 cup lime syrup to small pitcher; cover and refrigerate. Pour remaining lime syrup into 13x9x2-inch metal baking dish. Place dish in freezer. Stir syrup with fork every hour until frozen, about 4 hours.

(Adapted from www.epicurious.com)

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



Lemon-Zucchini Cornmeal Cookies

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon coarse salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup fine cornmeal
1 medium zucchini, grated on small holes of a box grater (about 1 cup)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a large bowl, mix butter and sugar with a wooden spoon until pale and fluffy. Stir in vanilla, lemon zest and salt. Add flour and cornmeal and mix until mixture is crumbly. Add zucchini and stir until a thick dough forms.

Drop by rounded tablespoons, 2 inches apart, onto two parchment-lined baking sheets.

(To truly get 25 cookies out of this recipe, you'll want to do rounded teaspoons.) Bake until cookies are light golden brown at edges, 25 to 30 minutes, rotating sheets halfway through. Let cool completely on wire racks.

<http://www.flourrrrl.com/2009/08/never-look-dust-bunny-in-eye.html>



(Both of these recipes come from Flourrrrl, Heather Sennett, who is participating in the "Cooking Away My CSA" Google group along with Chef Mark.)

Elote-Grilled Mexican Corn with spicy Mayo

After grilling your corn, take some mayo (about 1/4 cup for four ears) and mix it with the juice of 1/2 lime, 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika or chile powder (or red pepper if you like it spicy) and salt to taste. Using a brush, smear this mixture all over the corn. Then, roll the corn in crumbed white Mexican cheese. (If you don't have cotija anejo, Parmesan works just fine.)

Serve with sliced lime. Divine.

<http://www.flourrrrl.com/2009/08/allow-me-to-be-corny.html>



Cardamom Glazed Carrots

1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound spring baby carrots, washed and unpeeled
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
Freshly ground white pepper, to taste
1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
Zest of 1/2 orange
1/2 of a fresh lemon
Chopped chervil, for garnish

Heat olive oil in a large pan or skillet over medium-low heat. Add butter and melt, stirring to incorporate. Add carrots and cardamom. Toss with salt and pepper. Increase heat to medium, and add the orange juice. Cover the pan and cook over medium heat until carrots are just tender, about 5 minutes. Remove the lid and bring to a boil, cooking off the excess liquid. Remove the pan from the heat, add orange zest and toss. Place in a warmed bowl, sprinkle with chervil leaves and taste. Add a drizzle of fresh lemon juice just to brighten the flavors. Serve immediately.

<http://www.culinarymedianetwork.com/moroccan-pork-tenderloin-with-cardamom-glazed-carrots/>

Thai Eggplant & Basil Stir Fry (Pud Makua Yow)

1 tsp. canola oil
3 cloves garlic, chopped
2 chili peppers
1 lb. eggplant
1 c. water
10 large basil leaves
1/2 tsp. granulated sugar
2 tsp. fish sauce



Slice the eggplants into irregular shapes for easy turning in the pan. When it is sliced into a small disk, it tends to stick to the bottom of the pan and makes it difficult to flip or turn.

Chop garlic and slice chili peppers. Pick the leaves from the stem of the Thai basil.

Heat a pan or wok over high or medium high. Add oil, chili peppers and garlic. Stir until the garlic turn golden brown. Add eggplant and stir. Add a cup of water and cover the pan or wok with a lid. Keep the lid close until the eggplant is cooked. It should take about 5-7 minutes before the eggplant is done. The eggplant turns from white to translucent when it is done. Almost all of the water should have been evaporated at this point. If the eggplant is still not cooked, add a little bit more water and keep lid closed until the eggplant is ready. Add fish sauce and sugar and stir. Add Thai basil and quickly stir to heat the basil, so that it retains its color. Turn off heat immediately.

Serve hot with rice.

http://www.thaitable.com/Thai/recipes/Basil_Eggplant.htm