

THE TIPI TIMES

July 1, 2010, week 8 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Cabbage
Beets with greens
Zucchini/squash, 2.5 lb
Red leaf lettuce
Kohlrabi, 1 or 2
Cucumbers, 3
Parsley

About 1.5 lb total peas,
probably as:
Snap peas, 1.3 lb.
Snow peas, 0.25 lb.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Green beans, cucumbers,
zucchini, basil and more

MENU IDEAS

Farm cook Genevieve
Parmentier made an
excellent lunch for our crew
today, using many ingredients
in this week's box:

Curried summer squash, peas
and chickpeas

A casserole of layered greens
and potatoes, prepared with
lots of eggs and some ricotta.

Cucumber salad with parsley
and vinaigrette

Please help your site managers. We need your help with a few chronic issues.

- You must scratch your name off the check-off list when picking up your box. Please make a habit of doing this first. Your hands are empty, you are less likely to forget, and you will know if there are messages from us. Every-other-week members, this is a final chance to double-check your schedule.

- You must put the blankets back on the remaining boxes. This critical step keeps the produce cool for hours.

- Please flatten your returned box.

- If you ask someone to pick up your CSA box for you, please make sure they know what to do.

Sales of extra basil? - The basil was not ready to harvest this week. I will send an email early next week if we have extra basil to sell for delivery with the July 8/9 boxes.

Small blessings. I've been reflecting on some of the small things that make farm life special. **Scented alfalfa.** We have a weedy alfalfa planting at the back of our farm. It doesn't get too much attention because it's on thin, eroded soil. Dairy farmers clip their alfalfa before it's in full bloom to capture the peak plant nutrients for fodder. We let our alfalfa bloom to it's fullest and the field is beautiful, filled with tiny blossoms in shades of purple and white. The fragrance is stunning downwind from this field. It's a treat.

The first cucumber. A treasure hunt was on two weeks ago to find the first ripe cucumber. Everyone craves it. As usual, long-term fieldhand Maggie Schley found the first one. We've picked about 4000 cukes this week, which dampens the excitement of cucumber hunting. All the early cucumbers are such good quality. Enjoy the ones we sent this week.

A 7-year-old living across the street. Our son has a best friend who lives across the street. They like the same things: water, mud, frogs, bugs, fossils, Calvin and Hobbs comics, and any toy that can be launched into the air. We live in the country and it is wonderful to have a playmate living nearby.

Tadpoles. We found a zillion tadpoles living in an old watering tank! We left the tank parked in the weeds and it filled with rainwater. There are many frogs living on our farm, but we rarely see tadpoles because our puddles are murky with mud and algae. We'll be checking our tadpoles every day. *Beth*

VEGGIE NOTES. A few veggies are showing the effects of the fierce wind and rain almost two weeks ago, in particular the beets and peas. The beet greens are a bit tattered from the wind but eating quality is fine. Young peas are easily nicked by driving rain, so there are some brown spots and unevenness. Look them over while you are removing the strings in case we overlooked any bad ones. Everything else is in great shape.

Zucchini - You will receive either green zucchini, golden zucchini, yellow summer or patty pan squash.

Peas (Snap peas are plump, snow peas are flat.) - Snap & snow peas are in one bag agains.

Kohlrabi (round, pale green exterior, crisp white interior) - Kohlrabi is an unusual vegetable that I enjoy introducing to new CSA members because everyone likes it once they try it. Crunchy and sweet, it's a great addition to salads. **Storage:** Kohlrabi will store for a month in the refrigerator.

Uses: Kohlrabi are good peeled and eaten out of hand, or added to sandwiches. It is good mixed into salads, or prepared as a salad on it's own. You can grate it, slice it, or cut it into matchsticks. It's also good cooked. If you have it, the Asparagus to Zucchini cookbook has a long list of kohlrabi suggestions.

Beets with greens - This week we have provided beets with their leaves attached. The greens are delicious. They are almost identical to Swiss chard in flavor, texture & cooking time (the two crops are very closely related.) You can remove the midribs before cooking if you wish, but it is not essential.
Storage: Cover and refrigerate. The beet roots will last for weeks. The beet greens are perishable and should be eaten soon. If you don't plan to eat the greens, then separate the tops and roots and discard the tops, to preserve freshness in the roots. For all the cooking methods below, wash and scrub the beets but do not peel. The skins will slip off easily once the beets are cooked and cooled.

Cooking beet roots on the stovetop: Slice or quarter, cover with water in a pot, and simmer until tender. This will take from 25 to 45 minutes depending on how large the beet pieces are. Drain.

Roasting beets: Wash beets, but do not peel. On a sheet of aluminum foil, put beets (halved or quartered if large), salt, pepper and a few sprinklings of water. Seal the foil packet, and roast at 400oF until tender, about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Slip off skins once cool.

Microwave: Slice beets in half and place in a large microwave-proof bowl. Add ¾ inch water and cover with a plate. Microwave on high until tender, about 9-11 minutes. Drain and slip off skins.

Uses: Use cooked beets in cold salads, or dress simply with vinaigrette, onions, salt and pepper. Beets are also good tossed with sour cream, minced onion, fresh herbs and walnuts.

Whole Beet Skillet

From Simply in Season by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert. Serves 2 - 4.

4 - 6 medium beet with fresh greens	1 - 2 tsp. ginger root (peeled and minced)
1 - 2 Tbsp. butter	1-2 tsp. honey (optional)
1 - 2 Tbsp. lemon juice	

Cut greens off beets, leaving about 1 inch of greens on the beets. Place beets in large saucepan, cover with water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until beets are tender when pricked with a fork, 15 - 30 minutes, depending on size. While beets are cooking, remove stem from beets greens. Chop stems in 1-inch pieces. Chop greens separately. Drain the cooked beets and rise with cold water. When beets have cooled enough to handle, slop peels off with fingers. Cut beets in slices. In saucepan sauté stems in butter until tender. Add greens and sauté until bright green and just tender. Add sliced beets and heat through. Stir in the lemon juice, ginger root and honey and serve

Pasta With Zucchini, Ricotta and Basil

Adapted from Mark Bittman, New York Times, July 13, 2005, Time: 30 minutes. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

Bittman writes: "On a recent visit to Rome I saw an old friend, a native Roman with a lifelong interest in pasta. He showed me a traditional use for zucchini: combining it with thinned ricotta to make a creamy sauce that is somehow meager and luxurious at the same time. To make it, just cook the zucchini in olive oil, as you would for many other dishes. I use what I consider a minimum of olive oil here, but you can increase the amount if you like; it will mean you can add less water at the end. Then you combine the zucchini with ricotta and basil. By themselves, these ingredients would not become saucelike, so add a little of the pasta's cooking water.

This is a common technique, a way to create sauces from ingredients that would otherwise be too thick to act as such, but without using more olive oil or the other standby, tomatoes. The result is a nice little pasta dish."

Beth's note: I use much more zucchini and add scallions or Walla Walla onions if I have them.

Salt and pepper	1 pound penne or other cut pasta
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil	1 cup good ricotta cheese
3 or 4 small-to-medium zucchini, about 1 pound, rinsed and cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch dice	1 cup basil leaves, washed, dried & torn or chopped (or parsley, cilantro or oregano)
1 teaspoon minced garlic, or more to taste	1/2 cup or more freshly grated Parmesan

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Put olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat; when hot add zucchini, along with a large pinch of salt and a sprinkling of pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until zucchini begins to brown, then lower heat and cook until it is quite tender, about 15 minutes total. About 5 minutes before it is done, stir in garlic and begin to cook pasta.
2. While pasta cooks, warm a serving bowl and put ricotta in it, along with about half the basil. When pasta is tender but not mushy, remove and drain it, reserving about a cup of its cooking liquid. Use as much of this liquid as necessary, a bit at a time, to thin ricotta until it reaches a saucy consistency. Toss with pasta, zucchini, remaining basil and Parmesan, then taste and adjust seasoning. Serve.