

THE TIPI TIMES

September 30, 2010, week 21 (green EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Butternut squash
Cabbage: green OR Savoy
Leeks, 1.5 lb
Fennel, 2 or 3
Tomatoes, 2.5 lb
 plum OR slicing
Green beans, 2/3 lb
Poblano chiles, 3
Garlic

Almost everyone will receive a small amount of globe or Japanese eggplant. We'll send some extra beans to those who don't receive eggplant.

A few sites will receive an heirloom tomato per box.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Winter squash, golden beets with greens, scallions, peppers, garlic, and more

*depending on weather, critters & other forces of nature.

FARM NEWS - We had a lovely farm party this past weekend, with absolutely perfect weather. The fall party is our favorite farm event. The strawberry u-picks are busier and more structured because we host a farm tour. The fall party is relaxed, with members finding their own way around the farm. This gives us lots of time to visit one-on-one. We were pleased that about 325 members attended, many of them families with children. The kids had a great time digging up carrots and choosing pumpkins. In addition to pumpkins, we offered carrots, lettuce, kale, slicing and cherry tomatoes and broccoli for picking or gleaning. The gleaning fields are scattered around the farm, which gradually led members to the far reaches of our farm. We are pleased to share the farm in this way. One member emailed us that "I wouldn't have thought it possible, but the vegetables taste even better when picked by oneself."

We finally have cabbage for you. I wrote last week about the gap in greens for the CSA boxes. There's been a gap in cabbage production too, but we now have some nice solid heads to send. Like greens, cabbage grows better in cool weather. Our tomatoes continue to be abundant and good quality. Most of these tomatoes are from our third planting which is now reaching peak production. We expect to have small amounts of tomatoes for a few more weeks, as long as the weather is warm enough for them to ripen. Frost is predicted for this weekend. We'll try to protect this valuable planting with row cover.

We are pleased to be able to send fennel, tomatoes and garlic together again this year. They are a natural combination (think bouillabaisse) but their natural growing seasons don't overlap well. Tomatoes are a summer crop and fennel does better in spring and fall.

We are still assessing the damage from the lightning strike last Monday. We now have phone service and electricity to all buildings restored. We are still waiting for a new electronic panel so we can assess damage to the irrigation well pump. Oddball problems continue to show up. It was a few days before we noticed that the chargers for our forklift and power tools were damaged. We think we've ferreted out most of the damage. We have our fingers crossed for the irrigation pump.
Beth

VEGGIE NOTES. Butternut squash - These are a variety called Waltham.

Uses: Baked butternut can be mashed and used as a side dish, or in cakes, casseroles, soups or pies. Cut in half, place cut-side down on a cookie sheet and bake until soft.

Hints for handling: Be careful when cutting butternut. Microwave on high for one minute or two minutes before cutting or peeling. This softens the squash and makes it easier to handle. Use a potato peeler to peel butternut.

Poblano chiles, 3 (dark green or red, triangular, glossy) - These are the only peppers in the box this week. These medium-hot chiles have great flavor which is best released by roasting or frying.

Leeks (look and smell like huge scallions) - These are great fall vegetables. Use the white parts, plus about 1-2 inches of the green part. To wash, split the leek lengthwise, from the green tops about halfway to the base, leaving the base intact. Rinse well under running water, separating the layers to flush. If necessary, split the leek further if there's soil more than halfway down the leek. Shake dry. Leeks are generally eaten cooked. They can be sauteed, steamed or roasted, and can be used as a substitute for onions in many recipes. Intact leeks will store at least 2 to 3 weeks if covered loosely and refrigerated. The outer leaves may yellow. Just peel them off and discard. The inner leek layers will be fine.

Fennel - Fennel - Fennel is a 'swing vegetable'; it can be used raw or cooked. Cooking will soften and sweeten fennel, and will mute its anise flavor. Both the bulb and leaves are edible. Here are ideas from Alice Water of Chez Panisse about how to use fennel: 'It's strong anise characteristic seems to suit fish particularly well. ... We use fennel all the time. We add the feathery leaves to marinades for fish and to numerous salads, sauces and soups and we use them as a garnish, too. ... The bulbs are sliced and served raw in salads in various combinations with other vegetables, parboiled for pastas; caramelized and served as a side dish; braised whole; or cooked in vegetable broths & fish stocks.'

Tomatoes - The quality is surprisingly good for this time of year. Enjoy, the tomato season won't last much longer.

LEEK and FENNEL RECIPES. The radio show 'The Splendid Table' provides many vegetable recipes on its website: <http://splendidtable.publicradio.org/recipes/>

The recipe list can be searched by ingredient(s). There are quite a few interesting leek recipes, even a few that combine leeks and fennel. For example, 'Leek, Scallion and Fennel Gratin' from Deborah Madison's 'Local Flavors: Cooking and Eating from America's Farmers' Markets'

http://splendidtable.publicradio.org/recipes/special_vegetarian_scallion.html

Note: On-line, this recipe is mistakenly titled Scallion, Potato and Herb Puree, but the recipe is actually Leek, Scallion and Fennel Gratin.

FENNEL, LEEK and SCALLOP SOUP

Adapted from a New York Times recipe. Yield: 4 - 5 servings.

Beth's notes: This dish is a nice blend of flavors, a poor-man's bouillabaisse. The leeks, fennel, tomatoes and garlic combine beautifully. Using leeks provides a break from the familiar flavors of tomatoes cooked with onions.

1 cup fish or chicken stock
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 medium leek, cleaned and sliced into ½ inch slices
1 large or 2 small fennel bulbs, thinly sliced, fronds reserved
4 cloves garlic, minced
3 cups finely chopped peeled ripe tomatoes
1/3 cup dry white wine
6 sprigs fresh thyme, or three pinches dried thyme.
1 lb. scallops
Salt and cayenne

Boiled small potatoes, toasted baguette slices and garlic mayonnaise (aioli), for serving.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a soup pot with heavy bottom. Add leeks, fennel and 3 cloves minced garlic, lower heat and cook until soft. Set aside one clove minced garlic. Add stock, scraping pan. Add tomatoes, wine, and thyme. Bring to a fast simmer and cook until the tomatoes begin to break apart.

Add the scallops and the reserved garlic. Simmer until the scallops are cooked through. Season to taste with salt and cayenne. Stir in 2 Tbsp. minced fennel fronds, or more to taste. Serve with cooked potatoes or crusty bread.

GLAZED WINTER SQUASH

Beth's notes: I am sending this recipe again as I received many appreciative comments on it last year. It is a recipe I've tinkered with for a few years. It is special enough for Thanksgiving dinner and always gets raves at potluck dinners. Be forewarned; the squash shrinks during cooking.

1 butternut squash, about 3 lb.
butter, 2 - 3 Tbsp.
1-1/2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
2-1/2 Tbsp. maple syrup
2 tsp. soy sauce

1. Preheat your oven to 400oF.
2. Microwave the squash on high for one to two minutes, then peel with a potato peeler. Cut into 1-inch cubes.
3. Mix together the vinegar, maple syrup and soy sauce in a cup.
4. Heat a heavy 14-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Use a skillet that is ovenproof.
5. Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in the hot skillet. Add the squash cubes to the skillet and toss to coat with butter. Cook, turning occasionally with a spatula, until the cubes are browned and somewhat softened. Be gentle when turning the squash. Add another Tbsp. butter if you need to. You don't want the squash to stick, or the cubes will break up. Reduce the heat to medium as needed. The goal is to for each cube to be browned on several sides, yet still firm. The cubes will not be browned on all sides.
6. Pour the vinegar-maple syrup mixture over the browned squash, reduce heat to low, and mix gently with a spatula until the liquid boils down to a thin glaze. This will happen quickly. The glaze will continue to thicken during baking.
7. Move the skillet to the oven and bake until the squash is tender, about 25 minutes.

Glazed acorn squash.

Follow the recipe above. Substitute one acorn squash cut into 1-inch thick slices rather than cubes. Do not peel the acorn squash.