

THE TIPI TIMES

November 4, 2010, week 26 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Brussels sprouts, on stalks
Napa cabbage
Red potatoes, 3.5 lb
Carrots, 2 lb
Garlic
Onions
Beauty Heart radish, 1 or 2
Spinach, 0.35 lb
Butternut squash
OR cauliflower
OR Romanesco

PLEASE RETURN ALL CSA BOXES.

Please unpack your box at your pick-up site this week so you can leave the empty box behind.

THIS IS THE FINAL CSA BOX FOR THIS YEAR.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SEASON Every year has its strengths and weaknesses. As we reflect on this year's growing season, a few things stand out for us. This was an early season from start to finish. We were out in the fields a week early in March, and we are wrapping up our final harvests about two weeks earlier than usual. We are so glad that we decided to advance the starting date of our CSA by one week. It really worked well with our crops this year.

It was an excellent tomato year, such a contrast to 2010 when we lost many tomatoes to late blight. There were a number of crops that did quite well this season: strawberries, broccoli, winter squash, muskmelons and watermelons. We packed more of these crops into the CSA boxes than ever. We were particularly pleased to send more tomatoes and broccoli than usual, as these are crops that members tell us (via survey) that they want more of. So, what were the weaknesses? This was a poor year for peppers, summer greens and herbs. A few fall crops (spinach, cilantro) did not produce because of lack of water. Remember, we have not been able to irrigate because of lightning damage to our irrigation well. The lightning strike itself was the biggest and most dramatic disruption of the season.

Overall, we felt we were able to pack good boxes with lots of variety. We are pleased to keep 24 people employed this summer, no small feat in the current economy.

Our employees are already transitioning to their winter jobs. Two folks (Dennis, Georgia) have new jobs lined up at the Willy Street Coop in Madison. Both will work in the produce department, where they can stock our produce instead of harvesting it. Other folks have waitress or bartending jobs arranged. A few plan to travel this winter. Six people will continue to work for us part-time this winter, preparing storage crops for sale, then transitioning to greenhouse work in March. Employee (and farm cook) Eric Friedericks is a potter, and will spend the winter working on his craft. He spent last weekend firing his wood-burning kiln which reaches an amazing 2350oF. Eric has an upcoming show on November 6 and 7 at the Allen Creek Gallery in Evansville: <http://www.matthiasjames.com/eventsandampshows.html>

He is working on a new set of clay fermentation vessels, eg for preparing sauerkraut or kimchi. Those (and his other pottery) are available through his own business: <http://elementalpottery.com>, 608-301-5269.

We have about two weeks more work to complete our fall harvests. After that, we look forward to a quieter pace with more time to spend with our children and families. By February, we'll be rested and ready to start again. We'd like to thank each of you for joining us on this voyage this year. We hope you enjoyed the produce. Have a great winter!

Beth and Steve

BRIEF SURVEY THIS YEAR We don't need to conduct a full survey each year. This year, we are asking just for your reactions to the quantities of tomatoes we sent, and whether you enjoyed the heirloom tomatoes. We hope you will take this time to complete our brief survey. Here is the link: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e33yxbptgg2x9e90/start>

RENEWAL FORM REMINDER We will pack a copy of our 2011 renewal form in the CSA boxes this week. This is the same form that we distributed by email last week. The deadline to receive a discount is December 1. Until December 1, we only accept forms from returning members to ensure that returning members can sign

up for the site of their choice. After December 1, we open the CSA to new members, and it's first-come, first-served for the most popular sites, ie Outpost on Capitol Drive and the Outpost in Wauwatosa.

VEGGIE NOTES.

Brussels sprouts (large stalks) - We've sent the Brussels sprouts on the stalks this time, as the stalks are nicely packed with sprouts. The sprouts will vary in size. Just snap or twist from the stalks. Some stalks have 'fluffy' sprouts at the tip that have not matured and are not worth cooking. Our crew was thrilled that we chose to harvest them this way. It saves a lot of effort. You'll get about 1.25 lb of sprouts from two stalks.

Napa or Chinese cabbage - This is the large pale green head. This Asian vegetable can be eaten raw in salads, or cooked in simple stir-fries. Napa stores very well. Cut off wedges as needed and keep the rest covered and refrigerated, and it will keep for several weeks. Peel off the outer layer and it will be ready to use. Here are a few preparation ideas from the 'Asparagus to Zucchini' cookbook.

- Chop raw napa into green salads.
- Substitute napa in traditional coleslaw.
- Chinese cabbage cooks quickly. Steam 3-5 minutes, or until leaves are wilted down but remain slightly crisp.
- Substitute napa cabbage for common cabbage in recipes, but reduce the cooking time by 2 minutes.
- Napa cabbage is the main ingredient in egg rolls. Try making an egg roll mixture to eat as a cooked side dish instead of preparing time-consuming egg rolls.

Red potatoes - These are from Doug Rouse of Meadowbrook Farm.

Beauty Heart radish (round, pale green exterior, bright pink interior) - These are excellent thinly sliced in salads, or lightly cooked in mixed vegetable medleys. Some of these cracked during harvest. It happens a lot. The radishes are still fine.

Spinach - We only have a little spinach to send, so use it for salads. We waited and waited for it to grow bigger, but we can't wait any longer.

Crispy-Edged Roasted Brussels Sprouts

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16470219>

This recipe comes highly recommended by CSA member Connie James Jenkin who reports that her 10-year-old loves this dish. Thank you Connie!

Yin and Yang Salad with Peanut-Sesame Dressing

From "The Real Food Daily Cookbook: Really Fresh, Really Good, Really Vegetarian" by Ann Gentry, and presented on Heidi Swanson's recipe journal 101 Cookbooks (<http://www.101cookbooks.com/archives/001096.html>).

Heidi writes: "I picked the Ying Yang Salad for lunch today. It's easy to make the peanut sauce and marinated ginger tofu ahead of time. You can throw the rest of the salad together in minutes. If you aren't a huge cabbage fan, substitute soba noodles or do 1/2 soba-1/2 mixed cabbage. I've tackled many spicy peanut dressings in the past, and this is one of the best. Ann uses maple syrup as the sweetener and it plays beautifully off the toasted sesame oil and natural peanut butter... The crunchiness of the vegetables is the perfect counterpoint to the rich and creamy peanut dressing."

Beth's notes: We've haven't sent all the ingredients called for in this recipe, but you can make a beautiful salad with our napa, carrots, Beauty Heart radish and thinly sliced onion.

- 4 cups shredded napa cabbage
- 3 cups shredded red cabbage
- 2 carrots, peeled and julienned
- 1 (2 1/2-inch) piece daikon radish, peeled and julienned
- 10 green onions (white and green parts), julienned
- 1 cup Peanut-Sesame Dressing (recipe follows)
- 4 cups 1/2-in. cubes chilled ginger tofu (recipe on-line <http://www.101cookbooks.com/archives/001096.html>)
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds

Toss the cabbage, carrots, radish, and green onions in a large bowl with enough dressing to coat. Mound the salad into 4 wide, shallow bowls or onto plates. Arrange the tofu around the salad. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds and serve.

Serves 4.

Peanut-Sesame Dressing

2/3 cup creamy peanut butter
1/3 cup brown rice vinegar
1/4 cup maple syrup
3 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons tamari
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic
1 1/2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 cup lightly packed fresh cilantro leaves

Ann's header notes: If you'd like a spicier dressing, just add more crushed red pepper flakes. This thickens up once it's refrigerated, so you can either add a little water to thin it or leave it thick to use as a sauce on grains and other cooked dishes.

Blend the peanut butter, vinegar, maple syrup, water, tamari, ginger, garlic, sesame oil, and crushed red pepper in a food processor until smooth and creamy. Add the cilantro and blend just until it's finely chopped. The dressing will keep for 2 days, covered and refrigerated.

Makes about 1 1/4 cups.

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