

THE TIPI TIMES

June 28, 2012, week 8 (purple EOW)

Tipi Produce, 14706 W. Ahara Rd., Evansville, WI 53536, 608-882-6196, csa@tipiproduce.com, www.tipiproduce.com

THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Zucchini and summer squash,
3+ lb
Green bell peppers, 2
Beets with greens
Walla Walla onion, 1
Rhubarb, 1.5 lb
Red leaf lettuce, smallish
Basil, 1 or 2 sprigs
Snap peas (0.5 - 0.6 lb) OR
cherry tomatoes (partial pt)

One site will receive cherry tomatoes this week, all others will receive snap peas.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Peas, Swiss chard, zucchini, cucumber?, Walla Walla onions, herbs and more

MENU IDEAS

This weekend, we plan to eat cold salads and grilled veggies, and I recommend that you do the same. Squash, onions and bell peppers are all excellent when grilled. I use this dressing from the [Grilled Scallion, Asparagus and Turnips](#) recipe to boost the flavor of grilled squash:

3 Tbsp. rice vinegar
3 Tbsp. mirin
1-1/2 Tbsp. paprika
2 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds

Simple vinaigrette will also do the trick. We eat grilled veggies with rice, in burritos or in pasta salads.

Pea U-Pick recap. We had a lovely farm event this past weekend. More than 100 members came to visit the farm, pick peas and wander the fields. Steve took everyone on a tour. He's proud of how good the crops look despite the hot, dry weather. The shell peas needed careful picking, but the snap peas were in perfect shape. We're always glad when members can visit the farm and see the crops growing. Our next farm events will be raspberry u-picks in late summer.

Irrigation Man. I wrote last week about Steve's efforts to keep our plants watered. This is his most important work right now. Amazingly, plants can show water stress even while we are watering them. At times they just cannot absorb water through the roots fast enough to keep up with water loss from the leaves. Let's share some photos, to give a clearer sense of what Steve's work is like.



This traveling irrigation gun is imported from Italy, the home of Steve's favorite engineer (Leonardo da Vinci) who inspired this pose. Equipment for vegetable farming is pretty specialized, so we have several pieces imported from Europe. Steve is standing on a reel which holds a long 4-inch diameter hose. The yellow piece at left is a head that sprays water.



Steve sets the equipment in place at the edge of a field and connects it to our irrigation well via pipe we've set along the field edges. The traveling gun spews water across four fields at once, and moves the length of the field over several hours. This is actually our older gun, which is useful for the shorter fields near the buildings. The gun in the previous picture can irrigate a larger area.



Left. We water many fields via drip irrigation, with soaker hoses that slowly release water at base of the plants. This efficient method puts water exactly where it is needed. The photo shows a bed covered in plastic mulch, planted to watermelons, and watered with drip irrigation, the black tubing that runs under the plastic. *Right.* Drip irrigation tends to spring leaks, so Steve carries tools and fittings so he can fix leaks whenever he finds them.

Veggie Notes. Last week, I wrote that "all the crops this week are in good shape despite the heat and wind." As we packed the CSA boxes, I realized that the veggies were showing signs of the heat and wind. Here are some effects of hot, dry weather: zucchini or broccoli might be less crisp than expected, lettuce leaves might have brown tips, lettuce and greens might be a little floppy. In that case, submerge the head or bunch in a tub of cold water for 5 to 10 minutes to help hydrate and crisp the leaves. We're not sure if the heat will shorten the storage life of the veggies, but don't be surprised if they do not store as long as usual.

The first cherry tomatoes have ripened, so we have enough for one site this week. Don't worry - we will send cherry tomatoes to everyone soon. We often split produce among the sites, depending on what we have available. We track these partial deliveries so we can balance them in future weeks. We do our best, but some imbalances are inevitable, particularly for the EOW members.

Zucchini and summer squash - The plants are so healthy! These fruits are more evenly shaped than last week, now that the bees are pollinating thoroughly. Expect some bigger-than-usual squash next week because

they grow so quickly in hot weather. We harvest zucchini and squash on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, no matter how quickly they've grown.

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. Separate the tops and roots if you don't plan to eat the greens immediately, to preserve freshness in the roots. For all the cooking methods below, wash and scrub the beets but do not peel. The skins 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 9-20 minutes, depending on your microwave's power. 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.

Walla Walla onions - This is a sweet Vidalia-type onion, wonderful in salads. They will store for several weeks if refrigerated. Uses: These onions are very sweet and mild, and are best eaten raw. You can cook them but they tend to melt away. Do not try to fry these onions! They contain too much water and simply will not fry. However, they will brown nicely on the grill or griddle. Don't overcook. They are best when they still have some crunch.

Rhubarb - We watered and weeded the rhubarb and left it alone to re-grow. The plants responded beautifully, and this is a very nice picking. You will notice some minor scars along the edges of the stalks. That's where the stalks rubbed against each other in the recent winds.

Red leaf lettuce - Once again, the lettuce needs to be washed to remove soil splashed into the head during irrigation.

Basil (stem with frilly green leaves) - This is the variety 'Napoletano.' It looks a bit different than most types of basil. This is our favorite variety because the its leaves remain tender and flavorful even as the plants mature. Basil will blacken if stored in the refrigerator. It is best stored at room temperature, with the cut ends in water, for example in a glass or teacup. You will receive one or two sturdy stems this week. This are from the first pruning to shape the plants.

Basil Scented Rhubarbade

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

It is going to be very hot for the next few days -- time for some refreshing rhubarbade! We have tried to keep a pitcher in the fridge since rhubarb season began -- but I often find the pitcher empty soon after I fill it! Kids love it as much as adults do, and it makes a great cocktail base. Try it with a spike of vodka, gin, rum or bourbon.

Servings: 8

Prep Time: 10 minutes,

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 sprig Basil
- 2 cups Rhubarb , chopped, from about 1 pound
- 6 cups Water
- 2/3 cup Sugar , or substitute 1/2 cup honey or agave nectar

Basil-Scented Rhubarbade, continued

Instructions

Lightly bruise the basil by rolling over it a few times with a rolling pin. Put the basil and the remaining ingredients into a saucepan and bring to a boil, and cook until the rhubarb is very soft, about 10 minutes.

Discard the basil, then scoop out the solids and place into a blender. Add a little of the cooking liquid to keep the mixture loose and puree until very smooth. Stir the puree back into the cooking liquid, pour into a pitcher, cool to room temperature. Then place into refrigerator until cold. Serve over ice. Stay hydrated and cool!

Beets, Beet Greens, and Onions with Feta and Pine Nuts

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

Dish Type: Appetizer, Brunch, First Course, Side Dish · Total Time: 30-60 Minutes

Adapted from a recipe in Gourmet Magazine from September 2003, the addition of wilted beet greens adds earthiness and depth to this dish, as well as prevents the waste of the delightful if slightly bitter greens. This recipe has been requested by many a dinner guest in our home.

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 35 mins

Cook Time: 60 mins

Ingredients:

1 bunch Beets

1 bunch Beet Greens

4 tablespoons Olive Oil, divided use

1 Walla Walla Onion, sliced thinly

1/2 teaspoon Salt

2 tablespoons Cider Vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon Mustard

3 ounces Feta Cheese, crumbled

1/4 cup Pine Nuts, toasted

Instructions:

Separate greens from beets. Place beets in a roasting pan with about 2 inches of water, cover and roast in a 400° oven for at least 35-45 minutes depending on how big your beets are, until easily pierced with a fork or a skewer. Alternately, you can avoid turning on the oven by cooking the beets in the microwave. Cut to 3/4-inch cubes and poke the beets with the tines of a fork. Place in a microwave safe bowl, cover with water, and cook until tender, about 15-20 minutes. Microwave ovens vary dramatically in strength, and the time it takes to cook will vary accordingly. When you can smell the beets, it is time to start checking them for doneness.

While the beets cook, thoroughly wash beet greens, and separate leaves from stalks. Rough chop leaves and set aside, chop stems, keep separate from leaves.

Warm 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over moderately high heat, toss the onions and stems until well coated with oil, sprinkle with salt, cover pan and reduce heat to medium, and let onions and stems sweat for about 10 minutes. Remove lid, and raise temperature to moderately high. Stir veggies until any liquid in the pan evaporates and the veggies are tender and tasty. Add beet green leaves and stir over moderately high heat until greens are wilted. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

When beets finish roasting, slip the beets' peels off, and cut beets into small wedges, unless already cut to 3/4-inch dice.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, Dijon and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Toss greens, onions, and beets with the dressing, and top with crumbled feta and toasted pine nuts.