

THE TIPI TIMES

July 19, 2012, week 11 (green EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Muskmelon
Kale
Zucchini/squash, about 3 lb
Cucumbers, 3
Slicing tomatoes, 1.5 to 2 lb
Green bell pepper, 1
Red onion, 1
White onion, 1
Basil, 3 sprigs
Snap peas
OR globe eggplant
OR Japanese eggplant

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Melon,
Swiss chard,
Carrots,
Cucumbers,
Tomatoes,
Onions and more.

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

MENU IDEAS

Here's a few things we ate this week:

Muskmelon chunks wrapped in prosciutto

Bonnie cooked us a batch of ratatouille for lunch.

Lacey made us pastries filled with sautéed eggplant, peppers and greens mixed with smoked provolone.

Grilled veggies - See the recipes for ideas.

Irrigation Man, Part 2. Thanks to all of you who sent supportive emails over the last week or two. I printed your comments for our crew to see. They sweated the most to produce your food. Many CSA members wrote that the produce looks surprisingly good, despite the drought. I agree. This is insane weather but our irrigated crops continue to grow. The two most frequent questions are "How are you faring in the heat, and how is the drought affected the produce?"

How are we faring?

It rained 2.5 inches last night. This is our first rain since late May. It was a lovely, soaking, overnight rain, just what we needed. That will keep drought at bay for at least a week.

Damn, it's been hot. Steve is no longer as peppy as in our [June 28 photo](#). The hot, dry weather is trying for everyone, but especially for Steve because irrigation demands so much of his time. The intense irrigation of the past nine weeks has added 30 hours per week to his workload. Steve is accustomed to irrigating for short stretches each season, perhaps two weeks at a time. Nine consecutive weeks is another story. The irrigation dictates his days. He schedules two irrigation 'sets' each day, which often means getting up at night, which requires that he also schedule an afternoon nap. Even 30 minutes helps. We've discussed hiring someone to take over some of this work, but it is too specialized. We cannot ask someone new to move our precious irrigation equipment around after dark. One employee has become Steve's irrigation assistant and has taken over some of the responsibilities during the work day. (Thank you Clint.) We fed Steve dinner after the rain and sent him to bed at 7:30. He was such a happy guy this morning!

How are the crops faring in the drought?

We expect the drought to affect the quality of some of our produce, although this week's veggies look good. Steve tries to water each field once per week but that is not enough to replace rainfall. We expect to have enough produce for the CSA boxes, because we can take produce away from our store customers when necessary.

Weird weather brings out weird bugs. Our earliest watermelon field does not look good. Spider mite populations exploded in that field. We've never dealt with mites before but they are notorious pests during hot, dry weather. One end of the field is a wasteland of dried vines. We hope the healthier end will produce enough melons for next week's CSA boxes. We're doing our research and trying new approaches to rescue the later watermelon plantings. Fortunately, the muskmelons seem unaffected by the mites.

Tomatoes love the heat. The usual tomato diseases haven't developed yet because the leaves have stayed dry. The plants look great and we look forward to some nice tomato harvests.

Beth

Veggie Notes This is a fine box of summer food. I cut up the first muskmelon, announced to the family "there's melon for everyone," then sat down and ate the whole thing. Yes, I cut up another melon for them to share.

Kale - The green kale appreciated the lower temperatures last week. We stopped selling it to our store customers, watered it, and left it alone for two weeks. It rebounded nicely. Summer kale is always fibrous, so expect to cook it slightly longer than usual. I would not use this kale in raw salads.

Zucchini & squash - The zucchini and squash love hot weather, and continue to produce loads of squash.

Cucumbers - The cucumber beetles have abated so there's less scarring this week. I wrote a few weeks ago that the insect feeding damage varies from week to week. We haven't done any spraying; the beetles abated as part of their natural cycle.

Tomatoes - This year, we plan to send a mix of ripe tomatoes plus some less-ripe ones to ripen on your counter for a day or two. I'll send some photos once we are sending larger quantities of tomatoes.

Red and white onions - We are taking a break from the sweet Walla Walla onions. They will be back next week. Red onions fry better than Wallas. White onions are intermediate. If you still have Wallas hanging around from last week, you might want to keep them separate from the white onion so you can tell them apart. Wallas are more yellow.

Snap peas - This is the last picking of snap peas. We think these will be best lightly cooked.

Szechuan Grilled Squash Kebabs

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

Dish Type: Appetizer, First Course, Side Dish · Total Time: Under 30 Minutes

This Szechuan marinade is tasty on all manner of quick-grilled vegetables or fish; because of the sugar, it will burn if you use it on items that take longer to grill. Squash and Zucchini take just the right amount of time for the marinade to get caramelized, but not to burn.

Servings: 8

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoon Ginger, *grated*
- 4 tablespoons Soy Sauce
- 2 tablespoon Sugar
- 2 tablespoon Hoisin Sauce
- 2 tablespoon Toasted Sesame Oil
- 2 tablespoon Chili Garlic Paste
- 1 pound Patty Pan Squash, *2 inch cubes*
- 1 pound Zucchini, *2 inch cubes*
- Skewers

Instructions

1. Mix together all marinade ingredients and toss with zucchini and squash. Allow to marinate at least 15 minutes. Skewer the veggies. Grill over high heat for about 3-4 minutes per side. Can be served over rice, or as a side dish to grilled meat or seafood. If you would like to make it a vegetarian main dish, add drained cubes of extra firm tofu to the marinade/skewers.

Orzo Salad with Grilled Summer Vegetables

Contributed by [Local Thyme](#).

Dish Type: Brunch, Main Course, Side Dish · Total Time: Under 30 Minutes

This salad only gets better after marinating for a day or two, if it lasts that long. Leftovers make a great vegetarian lunch. This can serve 3 or 4 as a light dinner, or more as a side dish. This salad is forgiving with amounts, or types of vegetables you use, so be creative.

Servings: 4-6

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

12 ounces Orzo Pasta

1 Eggplant, or 2-3 smaller Asian Eggplants

1 Zucchini or Squash, about 12 ounces

1 Green Bell Pepper

1/2 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil, divided use

2 tablespoons Red Wine Vinegar

1 tablespoon Dijon Mustard

1/2 cup Red Onion, diced

1/2 cup Feta Cheese, crumbled

1/2 cup Pitted Kalamata Olive, coarsely chopped

3 tablespoons Fresh Oregano, leaves only, chopped

Salt and Pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Bring about 2 quarts of water to boil in a large saucepan, and cook the orzo according to package directions. Drain in a colander, and spread the orzo onto a large rimmed baking sheet. Toss with 1 tablespoon of Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and allow to cool while preparing the vegetables.
2. Trim and slice eggplant into 1/4 inch thick rounds (if using globe eggplant), or planks, if using Asian eggplant. Slice zucchini into 1/4 inch planks, lengthwise. Quarter bell pepper, and remove stem, seeds and white pith. Toss all vegetables with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Heat a grill to high, or use a grill pan on your stovetop at high heat. Oil the grate or lightly oil the grill pan, place veggies on grate, cover and cook until tender. Turn about every 3-4 minutes so they cook evenly, and develop small brown spots, for a total of 8-10 minutes on a grill, or slightly longer in a grill pan. Transfer vegetables to a cutting board and cut them into bite size chunks.
4. In a small jar with a lid, add the vinegar, Dijon mustard, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Tighten the lid and shake well to mix. Remove the lid and pour in the remaining 1/3 cup olive oil, and shake again until emulsified.
5. In a large salad bowl, combine orzo, grilled vegetables, onion, feta, olives, and chopped oregano. Pour the vinaigrette over all, and toss. Adjust seasoning with additional salt and pepper.