

THE TIPI TIMES

August 23, 2012, week 16 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Slicing tomatoes, 2.9 lb
Edamame, 1 bundle
Celery
Romano beans, 1.3 lb
Yellow onion(s)
Red bell peppers, #2 grade,
2 or 3

Members will get
cucumbers plus 2 springs of
basil OR
1.5 lb pickling cucumbers
plus a few dill heads.
We hope to rotate the
pickles + dill combo to the
remaining sites next week.

Melon: Most members will
get muskmelon but some
will get honeydew or a
Middle Eastern variety
called San Juan. See photo.

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Watermelon, peppers,
tomatoes, carrots,
cucumbers or pickles and
more.

MENU IDEAS

Ideas from our farm cooks
and CSA members:
- Tomato soup
- Steamed beans & sliced
onions with garlicky
vinaigrette
- Pizza topped with
caramelized onions, sliced
tomatoes and blue cheese.
- Italian green beans with
herbs and tomatoes/feta
- Add cooked, shelled
edamame beans to soup for
color and flavor.

Is your melon ripe?



We will distribute
several melon
types this week.
Muskmelons have
netted rinds and
orange flesh. The
shape varies with
variety, as you can
see in the two
muskmelons at
left. San Juan
melons have
netted, orange
rinds and ivory-
colored flesh.
Honeydews have
smooth pale rinds
(often with small
cracks or specks)
and white to pale
green flesh.

Steve grows a variety of specialty melons each year but they usually fail. We are excited to have some interesting melons to harvest this year, courtesy of the hot, dry weather. Here's how to tell if your melon is ready to eat:

Muskmelons - The muskmelons were picked ripe but some will benefit from a day or two of softening at room temperature.

San Juan melons - All are ripe and ready to eat. Store in the refrigerator.

Honeydew melons- Do not refrigerate until fully ripe. If your melon already has small surface cracks, then it is ready to eat. Otherwise, let your melon soften at room temperature until it has a slight give when squeezed. Feel your melon the day you bring it home, so you can tell once it softens. We find that honeydews become more fragrant as they ripen, but fragrance is a less reliable indicator than softening.

We continue to feature muskmelons instead of watermelons because they have been the better melons this season. These might be the final muskmelons. The next watermelon planting looks very good and we expect to send watermelons the next two weeks.

Veggie Notes

Celery - This is the nicest celery we've ever grown. We nearly gave up on it mid-summer. It was stunted and tough, but rebounded once it got rain and cooler nights. Almost the entire head you will receive grew in the last month, allowing us to strip off the stunted early growth. We learned something here, and will probably start planting our celery later in the year to take advantage of the cool fall nights. We only pack celery once per year, and want to get it right. This celery is more strongly flavored than commercial celery, so plan

accordingly in your dishes. Should store for three weeks, so use a stalk at a time as needed.
Edamame soybeans (bundled stems with pods) - See [last week's newsletter](#) for cooking info.

#2 GRADE RED BELL PEPPERS - *This info should be familiar to returning CSA members.*

Many of the red bell peppers we send in the CSA boxes will be our #2 grade. We do this to avoid waste and to deliver good value to the CSA members. The #2 grade peppers are excellent eating quality, but are not quite pretty enough to sell to stores. As a result, we place a much lower value on these peppers. This allows us to provide generous amounts of red bell peppers over the course of the season, far more than we could provide if we only gave #1 grade. We feel this is a good exchange, even if it means you occasionally open a pepper and find that it needs trimming. Here are the reasons that peppers are downgraded from #1 grade to #2 grade:

1. They may have a minor blemish, or
2. They may have minor insect damage, or
3. They may be very ripe and beginning to wrinkle. (These are especially sweet and delicious as they are fully ripe, yet they can't be sold to stores because their shelf life is short. You will find that the texture is less crisp than a #1 grade pepper, but the flavor more than makes up for it.)
4. They might be partially red and partially green.
5. Others are just too small.

The eating quality is fine (or excellent) for all these #2 peppers, as long as you are willing to cut out the blemished parts. We throw away all peppers that we suspect have rot inside (although one may occasionally slip through in either #1 or #2 grade.) Today's peppers are #2 grade.

Refrigerator Pickles

Beth's notes: We stopped canning pickles years ago because we prefer the flavor and crunch of refrigerator pickles. They will be ready sooner if you slice the cucumbers before pickling.

1 lb pickling cucumbers

optional: sliced red bell pepper strips, without blemishes

1 bay leaf

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 dill heads

1/2 tsp. yellow mustard seed

Brine (enough for 2 quarts pickles)

1 qt water

3 Tbsp. pickling salt or table salt

3 Tbsp. white vinegar

Mix salt, vinegar and water. Set aside and stir occasionally until the salt dissolves.

Clean the pickles. Place the bay leaf, one garlic clove and one dill head at the bottom of a one-quart jar or container. Pack the jar with pickling cukes (*and optional red bell pepper strips*), adding the second garlic clove among the pickles. Feel free to slice large pickling cukes into spears to get them to fit compactly. Sprinkle mustard seed over the jar and add the second dill head. Make sure the salt is fully dissolved, then pour brine over the cukes to cover. Pour slowly to allow air bubbles to escape. Cover jar with a lid and refrigerate. Invert the sealed jar every few days to disperse the flavors.

Sliced pickles will be ready in a few days. Whole pickles are best after one week.

Eggs Baked in Celery Cream

Contributed by Local Thyme.

Total Time: 30-60 Minutes

I read about this dish from Miller's Union Restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia in a newspaper article exploring dishes that celebrate celery. It seems to me, and to the writer of that article, that we use celery in the base of so many dishes, yet so few truly highlight and focus on the stalk. I remember finding that challenging when we worked on the "Asparagus to Zucchini" cookbook. And then I tried this recipe. Wow. This is a celery celebration.

Servings: 2

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1/3 cups Heavy Cream
- 2 stalks Celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup Onion, chopped
- 3 Black Peppercorn
- 1 teaspoon Kosher Salt
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 1 leaf Basil or small sprig of Dill, fresh
- 2 Egg
- 1/2 teaspoon Butter
- French Bread, toasted

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. To make celery cream: in small saucepan, bring cream, celery, onion, peppercorn, salt, bay leaf and basil or dill just to the boil. Turn off heat and allow flavors to steep for 15 minutes.
2. Butter 2 ramekins, and break 1 egg into each. Strain the sauce through a fine sieve into a bowl, pressing on solids. Spoon sauce over eggs. Bake for 5-6 minutes, until egg whites set. Turn on broiler, and cook a few minutes longer, checking frequently, until top begins browning. Serve with toasted crusty slices of bread.

Gazpacho

Contributed by Local Thyme.

Total Time: Under 30 Minutes

Truly a cooking bible, The New Basics by Sheila Lukins and Julee Rosso has presented me with many of the recipes I return to again and again and again. I have always loved gazpacho, but none more than quick blender version that I've adapted from this book. This is so easy to make, my daughter mastered it at age 7. The key to keeping this speedy and easy is to really rough chop the veggies -- no need for precision or small delicate pieces. Just break 'em up enough to fit into the blender. When I'm entertaining, I will reserve a little of each veggie to dice really fine as a garnish, but when it is just us, we puree it and devour it. Delicious.

Servings: 6

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Gazpacho, continued

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Red Wine Vinegar
- 1/2 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 1/2 cup Tomato Juice
- 2 pounds Tomato, cored, rough chopped
- 1 Red Bell Pepper, cored, seeded, rough chopped
- 3/4 cup Onion, rough chopped
- 2 Cucumber, peeled, rough chopped
- pinch Cayenne
- Salt and Pepper, to taste

Instructions

Combine oil and vinegar in a large serving bowl. Pour a splash of tomato juice in a blender, and then throw in handfuls of the veggies in batches small enough for your blender to handle. Pulse until pureed to your desired consistency. I like to leave a little crunch/texture, my daughter prefers it very smooth, probably because she likes to play with the blender. As each small batch is done, pour it into the oil and vinegar. When you have finished pureeing all the veggies, add the remaining tomato juice, pinch of cayenne, and season to taste. Stir to combine it well with the oil and vinegar. Refrigerate until cold and serve.

Italian Flat Green Beans With Tomatoes and Garlic

From the Washington Post

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/recipes/2008/08/13/italian-flat-green-beans-tomatoes-and-garlic/>

CSA member Ellen Onsrud writes "I was looking for something easy to do with the Roman beans from last week's box. I found this recipe and wanted to share it in case you hadn't seen it."

Summary:

This dish is reminiscent of an Italian method of cooking green beans with tomatoes for a long time, which was especially good for tenderizing tough, old beans. Here, fresh Italian flat beans (a long, flat version of traditional string beans) are cooked quickly and added to fresh tomatoes, garlic and basil. It's so summer.
4 servings

Ingredients:

1 pound Italian green beans or string beans, ends trimmed; cut on the diagonal into 2- to 3-inch pieces
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 medium cloves garlic, cut into very thin slices (a scant 1/4 cup)
1 medium tomato, preferably peeled, cored and seeded, then cut into 1/2-inch dice (8 ounces)
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
6 to 8 large basil leaves, cut into chiffonade (stacked, then rolled tightly and cut into very thin strips; optional garnish)

Directions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the green beans and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, until tender. Drain immediately.

While the beans are cooking, heat the oil in a medium saute pan or skillet over medium-low heat. Add the garlic slices, distributing them evenly. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes, until the slices become almost translucent and start to brown on the edges; be careful not to let the garlic burn. Add the diced tomato and salt and pepper to taste, then reduce the heat to medium. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, so that the tomato is heated through. Add the cooked green beans and heat through for 1 to 2 minutes; mix well. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

Transfer to a serving dish and top with the basil, if desired. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Recipe Source: From In Season columnist Stephanie Witt Sedgwick.