



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 8, July 30, 2012

This week's share:

Carrots, new potatoes, zucchini, cucumber, cipollini onions, beans, tomatoes, eggplant, chard, garlic, parsley

Next week's guess:

Lettuce, beans, onions, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, watermelon, peppers, basil

On the farm...

It was really great to have some of you out at the farm this weekend; great to get to show our members some of how we do what we do here and have you get a feel for what it takes to grow your food. Those of you who were here probably learned that we got an inch and a half of rain last week - hooray! While it is too soon to tell and we could sure use some more (regularly would be great), I think it is possible that that rain may have saved some of our most important crops - or at least ensured that they aren't a total bust - our potatoes, winter squash and carrots.

The rain was a blessing that we greatly needed. But it certainly didn't wash away the many critters that are feasting on certain crops in the garden this year more than most years. The cucumber beetle pressure is fierce; these striped little beetles attack crops in the cucurbit family - cucumber, squash, zucchini and melons. They eat the plant, flowers and, this year, even the fruit. It is these little guys that cause the scabbing and general, well, ugliness of the cucumbers that you get in your shares this week. Cucumber beetles are cyclical - some years there are hardly any and some years, like this one, there are thousands of them and there is not much you can do about it. So, you might want to peel your cucumbers this year! They'll be ugly, but tasty nonetheless.

The other pest that is really bad this year is the flea beetle. So tiny (hence the name!) yet able to inflict so much damage on crops in the brassica family (cabbage, broccoli, kohlrabi etc) especially tender, aromatic greens like arugula and mustard greens. Last week, we lifted the floating row cover (that we use as a physical barrier between these crops and the pests) and weeded beautiful, untouched arugula, turnips and mustard greens. Taking the row cover off to weed these crops must have been enough opportunity to allow the flea beetles in and this morning during our field walk we found these tender greens totally destroyed by flea beetles - something we have never experienced before to this extent.

This is indeed a challenging year. But, on a positive note, we also harvested all of our garlic last week and it is now curing in the barn - drying down so that it can be stored for the winter and rest of the summer. We also took advantage of the moisture in the soil to work in old crops, plow up ground for fall grain crops and soon we'll be plowing next year's garden plot. And who knows what next year's season will hold!



Lisa laying out garlic to cure in the barn.

Simple New Potatoes - Roasted or Steamed

New potatoes are so delicious they barely need anything at all added to them. This is an easy recipe that lets the flavour and texture of the potatoes shine with just a hint of herby flavour!

2 lbs new potatoes, washed
2 tbsp olive oil
or 2 tbsp butter
1 spring fresh rosemary or 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
1 tsp grated lemon zest
salt and pepper

Cut larger potatoes into 1 inch pieces and leave small ones whole.

For roasted:

Toss potatoes with olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast for 40 minutes or so until tender and lightly browned. After roasting, place in a serving dish. Add rosemary or parsley, lemon zest and salt and pepper to taste. Toss to coat.

For steamed:

Place potatoes in about 2 inches of salted water. Boil/steam for about 25-40 minutes until tender but not breaking apart. Drain. Place in a serving bowl and add butter, rosemary or parsley, lemon zest and salt and pepper to taste. Toss to coat.

Enjoy!



Contact Us:

Cedar Down Farm
519-665-2008
info@cedardownfarm.ca
22145 Conc. 14 RR#1
Neustadt, ON N0G 2N0
www.cedardownfarm.ca

French Potato Salad with Shallots and Parsley

- 2 pounds new potatoes
- Salt to taste
- ½ cup finely chopped shallots or onion
- 1 egg yolk
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ½ cup vegetable or olive oil
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley



Wash the potatoes under running water and remove any dirt stuck to the skin. Cut the potatoes in half or quarters, depending on the size of the potato, and place in a pot of water. Bring the water to the boil, add salt to taste, and cook until firm but tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain.

Toss the potatoes and the chopped shallots together in a serving bowl. Using a food processor fitted with a steel blade (or an emulsion blender), blend the egg yolk and the vinegar. With the motor running, slowly stream in the oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Fold the dressing into the warm potatoes, sprinkle with parsley and serve warm or at room temperature.

Eggplant with Tomato, Garlic and Mint

serves 3-4 as a side

- 1 medium eggplant, sliced into 1.5 inch long and 1/4 inch thick strips or into 1/3 inch thick circles
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 2 green chili pepper
- 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves, divided
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1 large onion, sliced into thin half moons
- 1 large tomato very finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons oil
- salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- some toasted pine nuts, optional
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder, optional
- some more fresh mint leaves for garnish



Wash and slice the eggplants. Sprinkle a lot of salt on the slices, toss well and allow them to sit for about 30-45 minutes in a colander. Rinse well and squeeze out the water from them. Crush garlic cloves, coriander seeds, chili pepper and 1/4 cup mint leaves into a coarse paste. Shred the rest 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves and set aside.

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed pan. Add the onions and cook until they are softened and starting to turn golden. Add the eggplant to the pan. Add salt, turmeric and chili powder. Cook on high heat while stirring constantly to prevent sticking at the bottom of the pan. When the eggplants start to have brown spots at the edges, add the mint coriander garlic paste and the tomatoes. Stir everything in, lower the heat and cover the pan.

Cook covered until the eggplants soften and are cooked through. The cooking time will vary with the kind of eggplants you choose.

Uncover and cook, while stirring and tossing; if the spice mix sticks to the pan, add a splash of water. Cook until the mix dries off and there is only enough water for the spices to coat the eggplants. Adjust salt. Stir in the shredded mint and the toasted pine nuts if you are using them.

Remove from heat. Garnish with more mint and serve warm with flat breads or over rice/pasta.

Zucchini & Chard Gratin

- 1 lb zucchini, seeded if very large (6 oz net once grated, salted and water pressed out)
- about 1 tsp salt
- 1 bunch chard (about 1/2 lb)
- 2 slices thick-cut bacon, chopped to about 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 small bunch parsley, about 1/3 cup chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 oz (1/2 cup) freshly grated hard cheese, such as parmesan
- 1/4 tsp salt, or to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggs (4 oz), lightly beaten
- 1 tbsp butter + extra for greasing the dish



Grate the zucchini and toss in a large bowl with 1 teaspoon salt. Transfer to a colander and allow to drain for 30 minutes. If chard is frozen, roughly chop and suspend in another colander to drain. After 30 minutes, squeeze remaining water from zucchini (and thawed chard, separately) by wrapping the vegetables in a clean kitchen towel and twisting (like wrapping a hard candy) until you squeeze out as much water as possible.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, fry bacon, tossing frequently, until browned and slightly crispy. Add onions, stir to coat in bacon grease and sauté until softened, about 6 – 8 minutes. If chard is fresh, chop to bite-sized pieces, and add to the onions & bacon, tossing to coat. Sauté until just wilted, about 2 – 3 minutes, then remove skillet from heat.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Add parsley and garlic to the bowl of a food processor, and pulse a few times until well chopped. To a large bowl, add spinach, bacon/onion mixture, chard, parsley + garlic persillade (don't know what a persillade is? Refer to Elise's recipe to find out!), black pepper and half of the grated cheese. Mix thoroughly; taste and adjust salt and other seasonings. Add eggs and mix well.

Grease a casserole dish with butter. Pack the zucchini mixture into the dish, then top with remaining grated cheese. Melt 1 tbsp of butter and drizzle over the top. Bake in preheated oven until top is nicely browned, about 40 – 45 minutes. Serves 4.

Herb-Roasted Eggplant with Tomatoes and Feta

- 1 1 3/4-pound eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 medium tomatoes, cored, quartered lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 450°F. Place eggplant and tomatoes on rimmed baking sheet; toss with oil and vinegar. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons oregano, salt, and pepper. Roast until eggplant is tender and golden brown, stirring occasionally, about 40 minutes. Transfer eggplant and tomatoes to platter. Sprinkle with feta and 2 teaspoons oregano and serve.