



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 10, August 21, 2013

There are certain key times throughout the year when my mind comes to rest on the idea of seasonality. Well, it happens often actually, but there are definitely peak times when eating what's in season where you live really effects my thinking. One of those times is definitely in the spring, after the long wait of winter when the first crisp greens come from the field and you savour each lettuce leaf and crunch of kohlrabi because you've been waiting so long. Another one of those times is in the fall when savoury winter squash is ready, their colours matching the colours that the trees are turning and their flavour seeming just to capture the taste and feel of fall.

But of course, one of those times is most certainly now. Now is the peak of eating in Ontario, that tiny window when the fruit is ready from field and tree. Nothing speaks more to the excitement and ecstasy of seasonal eating than a ripe tomato, a plump eggplant or a cold, crisp watermelon. On the farm, that seasonality often comes with a good bit of stress as we feel we must almost run to keep up with the cucumber vines as they burst forth, the zucchini as their fruits race towards giantness and the beans as they ripen. But in the kitchen and in life, eating food as it comes into season is probably one of the most vibrant, life-giving things you can do.

It's interesting that what our great-grandparents took for granted - that you couldn't get a tomato if it wasn't summer or a pepper in January - is something that we are having to learn anew. And, I'm sure that you will agree, it is something that is certainly worth re-learning. While there are many things that our modern agriculture and food system have improved for us, the quality and taste of food is certainly not one of them in terms of sheer deliciousness and in the delight of waiting for then reveling in your favourite vegetable.

Tomatoes shipped from Mexico in the winter and cucumbers grown in heated greenhouses just don't cut it. Not only because they are inferior in taste and nutritiousness but because of what they take away from our quality of life. I don't know about you, but nothing makes me happier than conjuring what to prepare with the vegetables as they come into season. I can dream about it as I wait for them to ripen and delight in it as those dreams finally come true. This is especially true of things that are short-lived. So right now, I make sure to eat cucumber every day - I savour their juicy crunch, I turn them into sweet, vinegary salads. I roast eggplant at every turn, I grill zucchini and I toss beans with almonds and balsamic and am glad.

I'm sure that the grocery store as a lot to offer and we are lucky to have so much abundance at our disposal. But I also know that nothing enlivens the spirit, the senses or the imagination quite like eating things in their prime - having to savour and relish them and then wait patiently and expectantly for their return next year!

A selection of the potato varieties we are growing this year...



This week's share:

Lettuce, potatoes, green onions, zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes, garlic, watermelon, beans, hot peppers, herbs

Next week's guess:

Chard, carrots, sweet onions, zucchini, cucumber, tomatoes, melon, watermelon, green onions, beans, chinese broccoli, herbs

Watermelon and Feta

From "Plenty" by Yotam Ottolenghi

Serves 4

10 oz feta
4 1/2 cups large chunks of watermelon
3/4 cup basil leaves or cilantro
3 green onions or 1/4 of a sweet onion, very thinly sliced (optional)
olive oil
lime
salt and pepper

Slice the feta into large but thin pieces or just break it by hand into rough chunks.

Arrange all the ingredients except the olive oil and lime, on a platter, mixing them up a little. Drizzle over some olive oil and lime juice, season lightly with salt and pepper and serve at once.



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New Potato Salad

From www.splendidtable.org

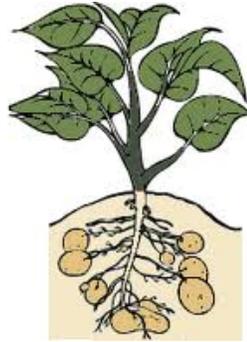
2 to 3 pounds potatoes, unpeeled
1/2 bunch green onions, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
4 to 5 tablespoons cider vinegar or white wine vinegar, more as needed
1/2 teaspoon sugar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 to 2 tablespoons coarse, dark mustard
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup snipped fresh dill leaves
1/2 cup mayonnaise, or to taste

1. Scrub the potatoes and simmer in water to cover until barely tender when pierced with a knife. Let simmer another 1 minute and drain. Run cold water over them for just a minute, drain and peel while warm. Cut into bite-sized pieces.

2. While the potatoes cook, stir together in a large serving bowl the green onions, garlic, vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Let stand until the potatoes are ready. Once they are cut and still warm, gently fold them into the vinegar mixture and let stand 30 minutes. Fold in the mustard, oil, dill, and mayonnaise. Chill.

3. Taste for tartness and seasoning just before serving. Garnish with fresh dill sprigs.

Keeps several days in the refrigerator.



Green Beans with Almonds and Balsamic

A Cedar Down Farm Recipe

1lb green beans, washed and ends trimmed
1/3 cup almonds
2 tbsp good balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp good olive oil
salt and pepper

Fill a large pot with about 1 inch of water and bring to a boil. When boiling, add beans and steam/boil until tender but not mushy, about 5 minutes. Drain beans.

In the meantime, toast your almonds in a 350 degree oven for about 10 minutes or until fragrant. Cool the almonds then chop into quite small pieces.

Heat a large skillet. Add the olive oil and beans and toss until warm and coated with oil. Remove beans to a large bowl and add balsamic, almonds and salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm.

*** Also great with a 1/4 cup of crumbled feta mixed in!

Zucchini and Almond Pasta Salad

From www.smittenkitchen.com

1 1/2 pounds zucchini (2 to 3, depending on size), halved lengthwise and very thinly sliced
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 ounces parmesan or pecorino romano cheese, thinly sliced on a mandoline or with a peeler
1/2 cup slivered almonds, well-toasted and cooled (300 degree oven for 7 to 10 minutes, tossing occasionally, usually works)
1/2 pound pasta of your choice (I like the extra bite of whole wheat pasta in pasta salads), cooked, drained and cooled
5 tablespoons olive oil
Juice of one lemon
Freshly ground black pepper

Further additions, if you wish: 1/2 cup crumbled feta or blue cheese (replacing parmesan), 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced (you can let this marinate in the dressing for a few minutes, to reduce its bite), 1/4 pound fresh arugula or 1/4 cup thinly slivered basil or 1 cup white beans, rinsed and drained

Toss zucchini slices with one teaspoon salt in a large colander set over a bowl or in sink. Let drain 20 minutes. If they taste too salty to you, rinse and drain them again.

Stir zucchini, parmesan, almonds and pasta together. Whisk together olive oil and lemon juice, seasoning generously with black pepper and salt to taste. Toss with salad and adjust seasonings to taste. Pack up salad and take it with you to the beach.

Leslie's Chimichurri

I don't know how authentic this version of chimichurri is, but that's okay because it's so good! Put this zesty, delicious sauce on anything - toss with roasted potatoes or zucchini, add it to steamed green beans, put it in a sandwich or on grilled meat. It adds a lot of life to any dish.

This recipe makes a lot and you can put it in the fridge and use it all week!

1/2 cup parsley leaves, removed from stems
1/2 cup cilantro, washed, stems and all
1/2 cup basil leaves, washed
2 large cloves or 3 small cloves garlic
1 hot pepper, any kind, seeds removed
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1/4-1/2 cup olive oil
2 tbsp fresh lime juice
salt and pepper

Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Or, for a rougher version that has a lovely texture, chop all ingredients except oil, vinegar and lime, very very finely with a large knife. Place in a bowl and mix in vinegar, olive oil, lime juice and salt and pepper. Add to anything and enjoy!