

PCSA for September 1, 2004

Pickup is today between 4 and 7 pm. If you are picking up in Urbana, go to 714 W Iowa; in Champaign go to 701 W Washington St. Produce is in the garages of both locations. Please use the smaller service doors to access the garages.

On the Farm:

What a difference a week makes. Just when the heat was returning to help out the warm weather crops, Deja Voodoo occurred. Moisture from the tropics found its way to Watseka, where the Moore farm was pounded by 6 inches of rain over the course of last week. Says Diann, "You just step and sink; it's like quicksand." The later plantings of beans were wiped out as the storms buried them in muck. Some of the cantaloupe and many of the zucchinis also were damaged. Their vines began wilting in the 80-degree highs following the rains. According to Diann, Jim agonized about the damaged crops through Saturday, thinking he might be able to salvage them. But with the last inch of rain on Sunday, he relaxed having realized there was nothing he could do. The water is now off the fields and the Moores were able to harvest French filet beans from the higher end of the affected field for this week's share. "We only got the tractor stuck once," says Diann.

Thankfully, all the animals had been moved to higher ground prior to the storms, though a couple of the mobile turkey pens were turned on their sides during one storm. The next morning found the Moores righting the pens and "herding" the birds back to their homes.

This week the Moores found themselves on the FRONT PAGE of yesterday's Chicago Tribune. You can view it for free at www.chicagotribune.com (input "It takes a village" in the article search).

2005 Share Signup Begins TODAY!!!!

Today is the first day to sign up for a 2005 share. As you may have read on the PCSA website, the share season is being extended to April in 2005 thanks to the new greenhouse. Please sign up as soon as possible on the PCSA website at <http://www.prairienet.org/pcsa>

In Your Share Today:

Red potatoes, tomatoes, onions, eggplant (shareholder's choice), carrots, yellow summer squash, Cubanelle or banana sweet pepper, bok choy, and French filet green beans. Use your beans tonight. Do not attempt to store them in the bag or they will rot. Steam or blanch them and serve with boiled potatoes topped with eggplant chutney, or as part of a Nicoise salad.

Recipe and Produce Suggestions:

Eggplant

Make a half batch of Easy Pasta Fresca sauce from page 171 of Recipes from America's small farms using your eggplant, tomatoes, onions, and sweet pepper. Remember that sauce recipes are merely guides, more or less of any vegetable is fine. Feel free to add squash if you want, as well.

Brush sliced eggplant (cut Asian varieties into lengthwise strips), onions, squash (cut into lengthwise strips), and tomato (bottom slices only) with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill until tender crisp. Layer ingredients in individual stacks with spoonfuls of ricotta cheese or similar soy cheese, seasoned with fresh or dried basil. Anchor with a sprig of rosemary or wooden skewer. Top with mozzarella or soy cheese and bake in a 450 degree F oven for 5 minutes for a vegetable napolean.

You also can make a low-fat, Indian-inspired eggplant chutney sauce that's good on steamed potatoes and green beans. Peel and cube your eggplant, sweet pepper, and 2 small onions into half inch pieces. Simmer uncovered with 1/4 cup of water with 2 T fresh lemon juice, 2 T cider vinegar, 1 t curry powder, 1/2 t mustard seeds (do not substitute ground mustard powder), and 1/4 cup packed brown sugar for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Keeps for up to 1 week.

Store eggplants in your refrigerator crisper drawer.

Onion

Use in eggplant recipes above or potato recipe below.

Note: Due to this year's wet weather conditions onions will not store for extended periods of time. If you cannot use them this week, place them in a cool dry place away from sunlight.

Potatoes Red

Make potato and roasted garlic soup to take the chill out of early fall evenings. If you still have garlic, roast it using the directions on page 97 of *Recipes from America's Small Farms* and reserve. Meanwhile, saute 4 small onions in 1 T of olive oil in a small stock pot. Peel 2 pints of potatoes and cut into quarters or half-inch cubes. Add potatoes and 4 cups of water to onions when onions soften. Simmer covered for 20 minutes. Puree half of potatoes, onions, and liquid with garlic in a blender, food processor, or in a separate bowl with a hand blender. Return to pot. Stir and serve.

Store potatoes in a cool dry area out of direct light and away from onions, which will cause them to sprout. A basket or net bag in a pantry closet is ideal.

Tomatoes

Use in eggplant recipes above. Do not refrigerate tomatoes. Store tomatoes on your kitchen counter until you are ready to use them. A colander is great for promoting air circulation which will help them to last longer.

Sweet Pepper (Cubanella or banana)

Use in pasta sauces or in salsas or eggplant chutney above. These peppers will store best in your refrigerator crisper drawer.

Squash

Use as part of an ad lib addition to the eggplant pasta fresca sauce.

Store in your refrigerator crisper drawer away from any produce in plastic bags to discourage mold.

French filet beans

Use these tonight! Do not attempt to store your beans in the plastic bag. These beans have seen way to much water and will decline rapidly.

Blanch or steam and serve with boiled potatoes topped with eggplant chutney above.

Or serve as part of a really pretty modified Nicoise salad...

Modified Nicoise Salad:

On a large platter, arrange the following in rows:
2 large fistfuls of steamed or blanched French filet beans
an equivalent amount of shredded red cabbage
4 boiled potatoes with skins on cut into wedges
1/4 cup nicoise olives (or more if desired)
wedges of 3 hard boiled eggs
wedges of 1 1/2 tomatoes
1 tin of line-caught tuna steaks broken into bite size pieces
(sprinkle tuna with capers if desired)
Drizzle with Salad Nicoise Dressing from *Gourmet*, July 2003
1/4 c red wine vinegar
2 1/2 T minced shallot
2 t Dijon mustard

1 large garlic clove, minced, and mashed to a paste with 1/2 t salt, and optional rounded 1/2 t anchovy paste
1 c extra virgin olive oil
1 1/2 t fresh thyme, minced, or 1/2 t dried
1 1/2 t finely chopped fresh basil
Whisk together ingredients through oil. Add oil in a slow stream to maintain emulsion. Add spices and herbs.

Bok Choy

Cut into ribbons and add to stir fries. Or chop off base and steam or blanch lower leaves.

Mushrooms with Bok Choy and Tofu

1 bunch bok choy
10 oz tofu, drained and pressed for 30 min+
1 oz dried black mushrooms
1 t cornstarch
4 t shoyu
1 1/2 t sugar
1 c stock
pinch of pepper
dash of sesame oil

Soak mushrooms in water until tender. Meanwhile, cut tofu into 1/4-inch thick slices. Fry in hot oil until they begin to color. Turn, fry other side. Drain on toweling and set in oven to keep warm. Trim stems from mushrooms. Place in bowl with bok choy. Steam with bok choy for 5 minutes or until bok choy stems soften. Drain juices into small bowl. Stir in starch and seasonings. Pour into small sauce pan. Heat, stirring until thick. Arrange greens, mushrooms, and tofu on platter. Pour sauce over. Serve.

Store bok choy in your refrigerator crisper drawer or in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.