

Aug 31, 2005

Kicked in the Teeth by Katrina

Please pickup and checkoff your share at 714 W Iowa in Urbana or 701 W Washington in Champaign between 4 and 7 pm today (use the garage service doors). Remember, eggs must be pre-ordered and paid. To order, call 815.432.6238.

From the Farm

Though I usually interview the Moores for this part of the newsletter, this week, Diann wrote the section in her own words:

Two more weeks and no measurable rain has fallen. What looked good a week ago is now suffering in the dry, hot, sunny conditions. This was our fifth try at fall crops as we are now out of seed and funds for purchasing more for the current season. Even if this were not the case, the calendar days are quickly disappearing. Most seeds take 6 to 8 weeks and more to have a harvestable product, unfortunately we have only 11 weeks left in the season and soil temperatures will only drop from now on.

Adding to this, the pond is nearly dry and Watseka fuel prices are approaching \$3.00 a gallon. Because of this, we cannot keep irrigating. This will affect lower value crops like kale, turnips, and radishes, which do not enjoy the popularity of other crops at pickup. Temperatures in the greenhouses are still over 100 degrees during the day, which is too hot for us to plant late fall crops. And, though we had hoped for watermelons, the drought has left us with less than the 145 melons we need to ensure everyone gets one, let alone, that everyone's is of similar size and evenly ripe. If you would like to try your luck with a melon, we will have some available through the farmer's market.

We hope for a late frost so that we can stretch out the eggplants, peppers, squash, and beans. It is now up to mother nature as to what the fall harvest will bring for the coming weeks.

Pasture Update

The Pours for the Pasture event added \$1,100 to the hay fund.

Lawrence Jackson and his brother Larry of Jackson's Ribs-n-Tips in Champaign have agreed to roast the hogs for a fall fundraiser. Shareholder Mel Farrell is attempting to secure Alto Pass vineyards as the location. The date will most likely be a Sunday and we are hoping to keep tickets around \$15. We need volunteers to help make this happen, as that \$15 depends upon getting many of the food and beverage items donated. As well as us selling at least 100 tickets. If you have ANY time or connections that you can lend, please call Anna Barnes at 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org

In Your Share Today

Today you'll find tomatoes, sweet peppers, red potatoes, green beans, eggplant, summer squashes, red onions, and cucumbers at pickup.

Storage and Recipe Suggestions

Storage Tips

Do not store squash or green beans long-term in plastic or they will spot and mold.

Unwashed potatoes store longer than washed ones. Keep them cool and away from light and onions to prevent sprouting.

Using All Your Vegetables

This week, grill or saute your vegetables and use for a warm vegetable salad with the dressing recipe below or to top creamy polenta, recipe also follows. Alternatively, you can make vegetable fajitas.

For Grilled/Sauteed/Broiled Veggies

Wash and slice all of your squash, eggplant, and peppers lengthwise into 1 /4 inch thick slices. Salt, pepper, and toss with a little olive or vegetable oil in a big bowl. Then throw it on the grill or saute in batches, or pop in your oven broiler until just softened. Use your grilled vegetables alone as sides, or to top salads (see recipe below), pasta, or polenta (see recipe below).

For flavorful addition to grilled vegetables, combine
dash of red pepper flakes
1 /2 t chopped fresh parsley
1 /2 t dry oregano
1 clove garlic, minced
2 t balsamic vinegar
2 T extra virgin olive oil

Pour over grilled vegetables. Let sit 20 minutes for flavors to combine. Serve at room temperature.

Creamy Polenta with Grilled Squash

This comes pretty close to the polenta served at the bacaro fundraiser.

Bring 4 1/2 cups of salted water to a boil in a heavy 2 qt. pot. Add 1 cup of polenta in a thin stream, whisking. Cook over moderate heat, whisking for 2 min. Reduce heat to low and simmer covered. Stir for 1 min. for every 10 min. of cooking, 30 min. total. Remove from heat. Stir in 2-3 T of good quality butter to finish and 3 oz of mascarpone cheese. Serve warm topped with grilled baby squash. Makes 4 to 5 side servings or serves 3 as an entree.

Mascarpone is available at ArtMart, World Harvest, EuroMart, and Persimmon. Alternatively, you can use cream cheese or mild goat cheese, but the polenta will have a stronger taste.

Vegetable Fajitas

2 zucchini or other summer squash, julienned
2 yellow squash or other summer squash, julienned
2 green bell peppers, cut into thin strips
1 onion, cut into wedges
1 tomato cut into wedges

Place sliced vegetables into a shallow glass or other non reactive baking dish, or a gallon-size locking plastic bag.

In a small bowl, combine:

1 /2 c water
1 /4 c lemon or lime juice
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 T worcestershire sauce or Chinese black vinegar
1 /2 t dry oregano
1 /2 t ground cumin
2 t brown sugar
dash of Tobasco or other hot sauce
1 /8 t liquid smoke (available at most grocery stores near the bbq sauces)

Pour over vegetables and marinate in refrigerator for 2 hours.
To cook, heat 2 T of vegetable oil in a hot skillet. Saute vegetables until desired tenderness.
Serve in corn or flour tortillas with additional lime wedges on the side.

Got extra zucchini? Shareholder Melissa Muckenhirn sends this family favorite:

Zucchini Cookies

2 c. flour
1 t. baking powder
1/2 t. salt
3/4 c. butter
3/4 c. sugar
1 egg, beaten
1 t. grated lemon zest
1 c. unpeeled zucchini, shredded
1 c. nuts

Cream butter and sugar, add egg and lemon zest. Beat until fluffy. Sift together dry ingredients and stir into butter mixture until smooth. Then stir in zucchini and nuts. Drop on greased cookie sheet and bake for 15-20 minutes, until brown, in 350 degree oven. While still warm, drizzle with 1 c. powdered sugar mixed with 2 T. lemon juice.

As seems to be a recurring pattern this year, the sugar was left out of this recipe when it first ran:

Double Chocolate Zucchini Cake

This easy to make cake stays moist and keeps well.

1/ 2 c butter or canola shortening
1/ 2 c canola oil
1 3/ 4 c sugar
2 eggs or egg substitute
1 t vanilla
1/ 2 c buttermilk (substitute regular milk with a T of lemon juice, or a thinned mixture of milk and plain yogurt)
2 1/ 2 c flour
1/ 2 c cocoa, Dutch processed is best
1/ 2 t baking powder
1 t baking soda
2 c grated or finely shredded zucchini
1/ 2 c chocolate chips, divided

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grate or finely shred zucchini and set aside. Combine dry ingredients and set aside. In a separate bowl, cream butter (shortening), oil, and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla, milk and beat. Fold dry ingredients into butter mixture. Stir in zucchini and 1/ 2 c chocolate chips. Pour into a 9 x 13 x 2 inch pan. Sprinkle remaining chips over the top and press in lightly. Bake 40 to 45 minutes until cake springs back when lightly touched in the center or when a toothpick comes out clean (assuming you haven't hit a chocolate chip).

If you have recipe suggestions, call 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org