

October 5, 2005

Dodging Frost

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

What a difference a few inches of rain makes. The once crunchy brown grass is now green again. And, another inch fell during the Moore's farm tour and pasture dinner this weekend. Nature timed it perfectly to allow people extra time to rub elbows as they huddled around the dinner tables under the tents in the timber ground. If you have not yet made it to one of these events, put it on your calendar for early next October. It is the best way to see the farm and learn about the interactive systems that bring us our food each week.

On the farm the fields are getting seeded to rye as soon as they are harvested to get food for the animals (the farm is still short on hay, see below) and to try to get a handle on the jimsonweed and foxtail the Moores inherited from the flooding in January. So far, so good. The rye is thriving and crowding out any competition. In the fields, it's down to pumpkins, zucchini, eggplant, broccoli, cabbage, kale, and brussel sprouts. The cold weather that was forecasted for this week seems to be delayed, so at worst it looks like the farm may see patchy frost. That said, it frost in the field won't spell the end of eggplants and peppers just yet. The Moores scrambled earlier in the season and were able to grow some additional ones in the greenhouses. However, the onions and the zucchini are now winding down, which brings me to the answer to the question of the season, "Why all the zucchini?"

We actually had the same amount as in previous years and for the same number of weeks, however, because the drought cut down on the variety of other things in the share, the zucchini has seemed more prevalent. Additionally, zucchini must be constantly picked to keep producing. This means back to back squash once the plants start fruiting. As with last year, to keep the squash from becoming a burden, the Moores picked it small so that smaller households would stand a chance of keeping up with the quantity.

2006 Shares Selling Fast

Over 60 shares are already sold for the 2006 season! If you have not yet reserved yours, please do so soon, as public signup is now underway. As always, you can pay in installments. To reserve your share, see: www.prairienet.org/pcsa/contracts.html Please make checks payable to PCSA and mail to PCSA, PO Box 1404, Champaign, IL 61824-1404. If you know that you will not be returning, please let us know this as well.

Volunteer Needed 10/12/05 for GCAP Produce Donation Delivery

Each week, extra produce from the Champaign and Urbana sites is donated to food pantries, soup kitchens, and other local organizations that can quickly get perishable produce to low-income residents. Next Wednesday, October 12, we are looking for a volunteer to deliver produce to the Greater Community Aids Project food distribution at the Eastern Illinois Foodbank north of Urbana. The produce needs to be delivered between 3:15 pm and 3:45 pm. It will already be packed up, labeled and in the fridge at 701 W Washington in Champaign. All you have to do is pick it up and take it to the Foodbank. GCAP volunteers will help you unload it so that they can distribute it between 4pm and 6pm

This is one of the best volunteer gigs going as it takes less than a half hour, the GCAP folks are always incredibly appreciative, and you get to feel good about helping people who really need fresh produce. Call 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org if you are interested for the 12th.

Hay Fund Update

Ideally we'd like to try to reach 3,000 bales this season so that the animal herds do not have to be severely reduced in size. We are currently at 2,078. If you have ideas for fundraisers, or can spare any time to design tickets, sell tickets, design fliers, post fliers, or assist with the planning/management/or marketing of fundraisers, please call 355-6279 or email info@prairielandcsa.org

In Your Share Today

Today you'll find broccoli, yellow onions, small bell peppers, eggplants, mild kale, heirloom delicata squash, zucchini. and summer squash. Delicata is not a long-storing squash (3 weeks at room temperature at most with normal growing conditions.) Like the other survivors of this year's multiple 90-degree days, the delicatas are very ripe. Plan on cooking and eating it this week or cook it and freeze it for later.

Storage and Recipe Suggestions

Delicata Squash

Do not attempt long-term storage of your delicata squash even though it is quite attractive. Cook it up for this week or cook and freeze for later this winter. Simple preparations are best for delicata, as its name suggests heavy handed seasoning can easily overwhelm it's delicate taste. This heirloom squash has a mild, nutty flavor, reminiscent of spaghetti squash without the strings. To cook, split the squash in half, use a spoon to remove seeds. Brush inside flesh with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, thyme if you must. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes until tender. Use a large spoon to remove squash from its peel. Great with pasta or as a side for grilled chicken. Fall veggies, as well as tomatoes go well with whole wheat pastas like Bionaturae penne, as well as other shapes. You can find Bionaturae at several CU organic food stores, as well as coops like Common Ground in Champaign and Fruited Plain (www.fruitedplain.org).

Broccoli

The hale damaged some of the spring crop, and it looked like drought was going to claim the fall crop, however, the Moores have brought broccoli to the shares once again. Steam or do as minimal of preparation as possible as this is the last of this crop for the year.

Kale:

For best flavor, blanch kale until just wilted in salted, boiling water. Steamed kale is great tossed with pasta or as a side with roasted chicken or fish. If you didn't try Roasted Chicken with Swiss Chard and Fresh Corn Relish on page 249 in Recipes from America's Small Farms last week, try it this week with kale. Substitute good quality frozen corn for fresh; Cascadian Farms is good. You can also substitute thinly sliced yellow onion for green. As with Swiss chard, kale substitutes easily for spinach in most recipes. Try it in quiche or as part of a savory tart.

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